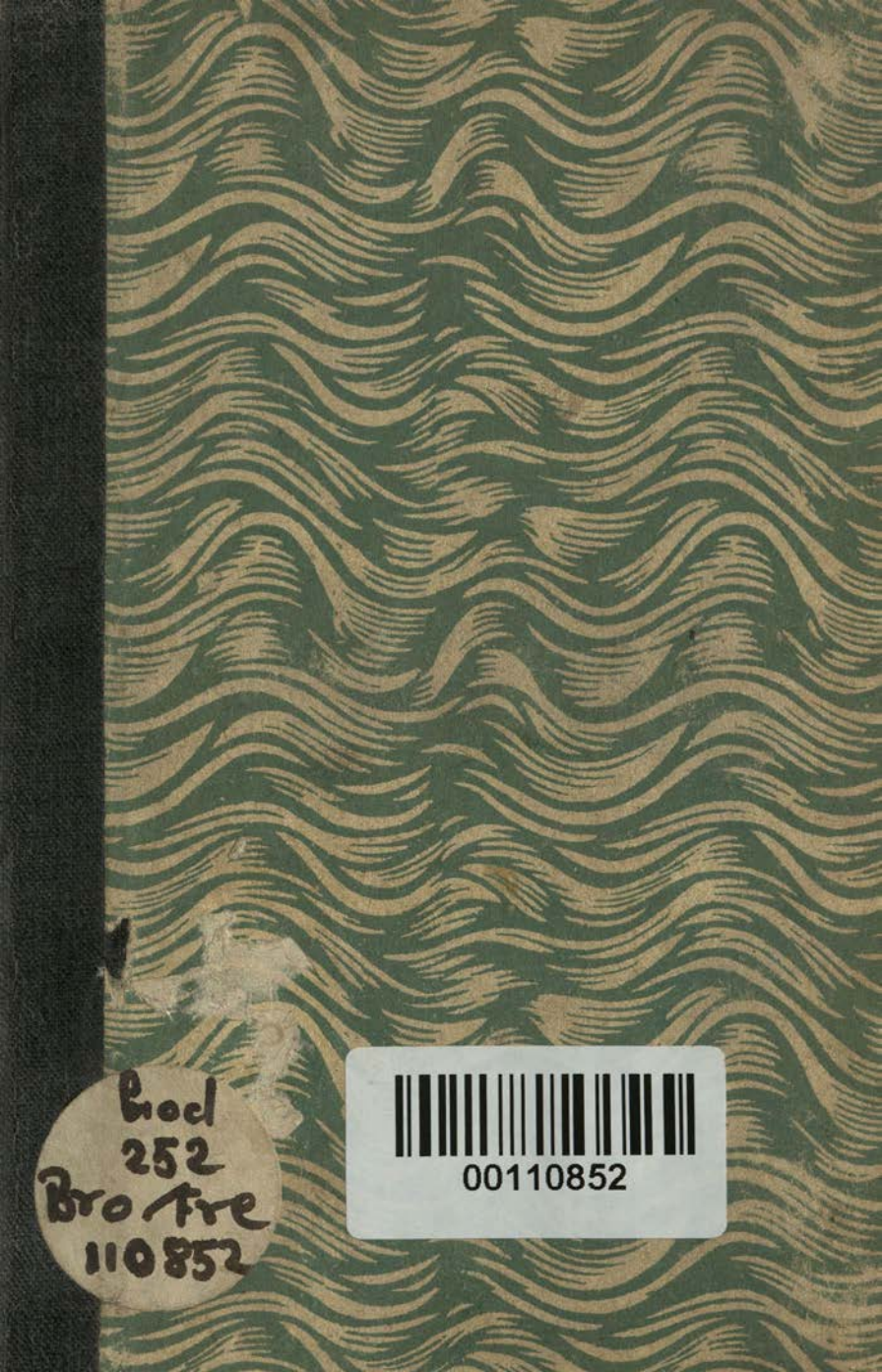
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eedom in the Church of England.

SIX SERMONS

SUGGESTED BY

THE VOYSEY JUDGMENT

PREACHED IN S. JAMES'S CHAPEL, YORK STREET

BY THE

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REV. STOPFORD A. BROOKE,

Honorary Chaplain to the Queen.

LONDON:
RY S. KING AND CO., 65 CORNHILL.
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PREFACE.

THE SERMONS contained in this little book were suggested by the Judgment pronounced in the case of Mr. Voysey, and were consecutively preached in S. James's Chapel, [illegible]k Street. Some matter now included in them was [illegible]tted in delivery, and the Sermon on 'Freedom in the [illegible]rch,' though last in point of time, is now placed at beginning, for obvious reasons. It takes the place [illegible]n introduction.

must apologise to some of my readers for the way in [illegible]ch some things are repeated over and over again in [illegible]erent words; but repetition, though dull, is not always [illegible]istake.

The reasons why I publish them appear sufficiently [illegible]n the Sermons themselves. The Judgment itself is impugned in them, but certain phrases on three great [illegible]jects, which, I believe, have crept in unawares, and [illegible]ch seemed to many to impose the views of a special [illegible]y on the whole Church, are claimed as unintentional [illegible]rs, or as intentionally modified by other phrases. With [illegible]ences, generally speaking, we have nothing to do. A

legal decision looks only to the exact question before it. But these phrases (which are dwelt on in the text)—since they were partly mixed up with the questions decided and seemed to go beyond them, and since the inferences naturally drawn from them were taken by many as actual decisions binding on the Clergy—troubled so many persons, and compromised the Clergy so much in the opinion of others, that it was impossible to be silent. It seemed, therefore, necessary to openly claim the liberty we had hitherto enjoyed in quiet, and to deny that the Judgment really intended to abridge it.

To some these Sermons will seem too orthodox, to oth the contrary; but I trust that all will recognise in them sincere adherence to the great doctrines of the Divinity Christ, of the necessity of a Revelation and an Atoneme for sin, and the deep desire I possess that in the midst those manifold differences of opinion, the existence which I cherish as a means of arriving at truth, we m not lose our liberty through fear, nor our reverence truth through recklessness of opinion on the one side, through a blind devotion to transient forms of thoug upon the other.

STOPFORD A. BROOKE.

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SERMONS.

I

FREEDOM IN THE CHURCH.

And he gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto *the perfect Man*, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, &c.—EPHESIANS, iv. 11–16.

THE conception of Humanity as one organic being is made up of two ideas; diversity of parts, unity of nature. The unity of nature makes all the parts so related, each to each, that we are enabled to build them up into the conception of one being whom we call the Man. The diversity of parts enables us to compose them into a living whole. They are not like a number of notes of the same pitch and tone, out of striking which nothing comes but a monotonous roar, but are like a number of diverse notes capable of being composed into a finished symphony, every chord and note of which supports, prepares for, is in communion with, enhances, and develops every other note and chord. All are so mutually dependent that not one note could be lost without unloosing the bond which ties them all; and all lead to the single grand impression which causes us to say, in spite of, nay, because of, the infinite variety—'that is one conception, a perfect whole.'

It is thus we arrive at the conception of humanity as one Man. Each member is linked to each, necessary to each, assisted by and assisting each, giving and receiving, dying and living in turn, modifying and suffering modification by contrast, by opposition, by concord—and all in the past and present form the one ideal man, whom we call Humanity.

In different countries and times different modes of human nature were worked out, different ideas necessary to complete the great idea of the race. The Hindoo, the Egyptian, the Jew, elaborated their sides of humanity, and left to the future one or two principal conceptions. The Greek worked out the idea of harmony and the necessary results of this worship of harmony in poetry, philosophy, and art. The Roman elaborated the idea of law and the correlative of law, duty. The ancient German the idea of freedom and its correlative, individuality. Add to these general ideas a crowd of particular ones, partly political—as when a society was the expression either of the democratic principle, as in Greece, or the municipal principle, as at Rome; partly moral—as the assertion of the greatness of temperance at Sparta, or the assertion of the heroism of the struggle against fate, as in the Greek drama; partly ideas belonging to feeling and imagination—as the sacredness of nature and the emotion of the beautiful; and then combine all these in thought into the being of one man, leaving aside those modifications of them which the experience of history has shown to be alien to human nature; and considering—not how they exist as they stand apart, but how they exist in union with, and how they act and react on, one another;—then behold beneath them all the one human heart and intellect and passions—as the fountain whose waters flow through the whole great river—

and you will approach the conception of the unity of the race. Of all these ideas, we could not bear to lose one. There is not one of these representations of human thought which has not done its part in the growth of the main idea. We want every conceivable phase of human nature to be embodied in the history of the race; and the more numerous and complex are these embodiments, the nearer we are getting to the conception of the united whole—of the complete man. We get nearer to it when we look at modern Europe. Almost every form of social organisation, every variety of political systems, every kind of Christian creed, every phase of intellectual activity, every type of human feeling, every form of literature seem to coexist in Europe, and to coexist in a thousand modifications, and in ceaseless conflict—the antagonism bringing out day by day the noble and human ideas and rejecting the base and unhuman ones—and in the whole progress the idea of the perfect man of humanity becoming richer and more developed in proportion as its parts become more various and its complexity greater. Instead of mourning over what seems to us confusion, or regretting the simplicity of Asiatic organisations, we should rejoice in knowing that the more every possible phase of human thought, feeling, and life is represented, the higher is the inner unity of Europe, and the less chance is there of that decay which follows on any one particular form of government, or any particular direction of thought becoming dominant. If all the countries of Europe were governed by England, in accordance with the English system, the result would be stagnation. Europe would become like China. If the French character, or the German, or the Italian were to disappear from Europe, the loss to the progress of the race would be incalculable. We

need them all and more in order to conceive and complete our ideal Man—in order to move forwards to the realisation of Humanity.

But, you may say, certain characteristic national types, such as the Roman—certain great ideas, such as that of the feudal system—have disappeared. True; but only when they had left that which was good in the type and the idea so deeply impressed on humanity that it became an integral part under other forms of every future type, and lived in the whole being of the race. The form under which it had grown up vanished, for its work was done—but the idea remained.

Now, preserving in our minds this conception of the unity of the race, we can go on to represent the unity of a nation. Take England, for example. We must conceive of the nation as one Being, growing into perfection by the slow formation and accretion of great ideas. The unity of this organism will have within it an infinite variety of parts, each representing some idea or feeling or mode of life, and all bound together by a common spirit—love of the idea represented in the being whom we call England. The more diversified the ideas and the systems of thought, the more manifold the forms of feeling, the more varied the literary, artistic, political, and religious life, and the more these are all in a state of active action and reaction one on another, the richer and the more developed will be the national unity. The real danger to the progress of the nation will be when there arises the possibility of any one system, or class idea, or mode of feeling becoming dominant, and like Aaron's rod, swallowing all the rest. Simplicity will produce monotony, and monotony stagnation.

It follows from this that the nation will be tending to the

true unity of a living organism only when every man in it has power to develope himself freely within certain limits chosen by general consent, and has power to do so in every possible variety of situation. Of course, these individuals freely developing themselves will group themselves into bodies agreeing together in main principles, but reserving freedom of action and thought on points of opinion. Some of these opinions will be wise, others absurd, others absolutely deleterious; but, as we saw in the case of the history of the whole race that the ideas which were evil were eliminated by time and rejected, so in the case of the nation it is absolutely necessary that the absurd and harmful ideas should be expressed, in order that they may be seen to be what they are, and that time and conflict may destroy them. Hidden, repressed, they exist as an inward disease. Freely expressed, they are seen and burnt away.

With us there is a body which claims to represent the nation, the Parliament of England. It should be a miniature of the national life. It should have its complexity and its one spirit of devotion to England. Its members should represent, not certain isolated and selfish interests, nor certain classes of men, but the leading ideas of the nation; and all these ideas, absurd, good, evil, wise, or romantic, should be represented. All the tendencies of thought in England which have sufficient force to become streams of thought should all flow, in the form at least of one representative, into the river of the British Parliament. The only class of ideas which are banished are those which are fundamentally subversive of the Constitution. No one would be elected or, if elected, admitted to Parliament who put forward his intention to overthrow the provisions of the Bill of Rights, or refused

to take the oath of allegiance to the sovereign. But within certain broadly-traced limits he is free to express the views he represents, even though every other man in Parliament may think those views absurd, or even evil.

Any new phase of national thought may be good or it may be bad; whether it be one or the other, the very fact of its being new will be a good in the end, as it will disturb the waters and produce conflict; and if evil, will throw the opposite idea, which is good, into sharper outline; and if good, will make its converts, and subvert some existing evil. The only unmixt evil is to silence it by intolerance. One of the main duties, then, of the nation and the representatives of the nation is not only to tolerate as far as possible every form of opinion, but to try and get into Parliament representatives of each phase of national thought.

Having now got some principles of thought, let me turn to the unity of the Church of England. I pass over the great subject of the unity of the universal Church of Christ, merely saying that the same principles which we have laid down with regard to the unity of humanity apply, without alteration, to the true conception of its unity.

In closing to-day the series of sermons which I have preached on topics suggested by the judgment of the Privy Council, I wish to speak of the idea of the Church of England as I conceive it, but more especially of the position of the clergy in the Church.

The Church of England claims to be a National Church, and consists, in idea, of all the laity of the nation without exception, and of a body of men who represent, within certain necessary limits, the religious thought of the laity.

It does not, however, in fact, consist of all the laity. There

are many who refuse to belong to its communion on account of ecclesiastical differences: there are others who deny the whole of its religion. But by right every Englishman is a member of the National Church. It is of his own free choice that he rejects his right.

Within its actual boundaries, however, it ought, on the principles already laid down, to permit of every phase of religious thought possible to Englishmen, within certain limits which demand belief in a few cardinal doctrines.

In the assent of all to these doctrines, and in the common love of all to God in Christ, and in the common love of the body to which they belong coexisting with an almost endless variety of individual views about these doctrines, consists the unity of the Church of England. The more various the shades of religious thought, the more complex the varieties of religious feeling, the more these act and react on, oppose, and unite with one another, the greater and richer will be the unity. The loss of one religious idea is the loss of so much material for growth, and any tendency to bind its members down to any detailed scheme of opinions in the matter of doctrine is the introduction of an element of decay, the subversion of a living unity by a dead uniformity, the replacing of a Church by a Sect.

Any decision, then, of the Judicial Committee which should, as the late Judgment seems to many to have done, bind upon the clergy, and through the clergy on those of the laity who receive their teaching from the clergy, any one particular theory of the Atonement or of Original Sin, or should, by denying freedom of Biblical criticism to the clergy shut away from the churchgoing laity this whole class of subjects, has a tendency, if not more than a tendency, to deny the idea of the

Church and to destroy the variety of its unity. Any declarations, such as have issued again and again in past discussions from leading men among the clergy—that all doubt must be stifled, that all who take part in critical enquiry must be repressed—that we must keep in the old paths, that the development of religious opinions on doctrinal truths must be denied—these, if they could be enforced on the laity and clergy, would soon make the Church into a narrow and bigoted sect, isolated—uniform but devoid of unity.

And could such be the meaning of the late Judgment, and were it, as such, to form a precedent, it would soon make a Church formed on the model of the Chinese nation, existing in a paradise of peace if you like, but quietly dying like China of prolonged infancy. We prefer a Church, existing, like Europe, in a state of political life; torn, if you choose to say so, with theological disputes, with hundreds of ideas in conflict; but still, like Europe, full of life, of belief in the future, of intellectual movement and spiritual fervour; preserving in its midst an inner unity, and working that out by means of the differences which seem to deny it.

In such a Church new ideas will meet with fair play; new forms of opinion, new methods of explaining the fixed doctrines, new forms of ritual will be freely investigated and tried. Free discussion will eliminate what is evil in them and retain what is good. If they are doctrinally possible in any sense, the Church will gladly embody them, that, by a greater variety of thoughts and of operation, its unity may be more richly developed. It may be that the forms under which certain true ideas have been represented will pass away, but they will only do so when the ideas themselves have been absorbed into the Being of the Chu.. Nothing necessary or noble will really be lost.

With regard to the body in the Church which repr - sents, or ought to represent, the religious thought of the nation, the body of clergy. They ought to be in idea the spiritual parliament of the people. But as the representatives of the nation are bound to restrict their political opinions within certain constitutional limits of the greatest breadth consistent with the preservation of the State as it exists, so the clergy with regard to the Church and its requirements.

On the whole, they represent more largely than one would think possible the various phases of Christian thought in England. They are, for the most part, up to and in many instances beyond the general level of culture. They are educated men, and they move in all classes of society from the highest to the lowest. They stand as mediators between the rich and poor, and receive into themselves the ideas of both of these classes. Some of them belong, by right of their connection with the State, to the aristocracy; others to the middle class, and others to the democratic element. They are able as such to represent religious ideas as they are influenced by political systems of thought. Again, they feel as representatives of a national Church that all within the range of their several districts—no matter what and who those are—dissenters, non-churchgoers, infidels—are their responsibility, and are given to their spiritual care by the nation. Hence they are in idea, not ministers of a denomination but ministers of humanity. Their sphere of work is not a congregation but a nation.

I believe that the national parliament and the body of national clergy ought to be analogous on most points. The spiritual parliament ought to represent every religious tendency in the nation which is not diametrically a violation of

the charter of the Church; and that charter ought to be kept as open and elastic as possible. The Church ought to demand agreement in certain fundamental doctrines, but not to define the way in which those doctrines must be held; to tolerate every form of opinion on those doctrines which does not absolutely contradict them in a sense to be determined by the law; nay more, not only to tolerate but to desire such expression if it represent any phase of English religious thought; to listen to it, though it seem to nine-tenths of the members of the Church absurd and heretical; to encourage debate on every new view, and to remember that the only unmixt evil is arbitrary restriction of opinion. For if the clergy of the national Church do not represent all the religious ideas of its children, within the most extensive limits consistent with its existence, it is no longer national. Its representation requires remodelling.

This is the true idea of the Church of England, an idea which very few seem to understand. This is the idea on which the liberal clergy base their position in the Church, and which they strive to push forward and support. Many attempts have been made of late years to narrow this conception and to overthrow it, but, thanks to our union with the State, they have failed. First came the Gorham case. Suppose the Judgment in that case had gone the other way, every conscientious clergyman holding strong Evangelical views would have left the Church. Could that have been a national Church in which the vast body of the Evangelical School with all its phases was unrepresented? We, on the contrary, retained them all. Then came the famous Judgment about Essays and Reviews. Suppose that Judgment had gone the other way; every conscientious clergyman holding Broad Church

views would have found his position in the Church untenable. Should they all have gone, what would have become of the representation of a large and increasing body of religious thinkers? It was wisely determined to retain them all. So far our progress to the establishing of a true idea of a Church has been steady. Quietly—soberly—the State has met the feverish excitement of ecclesiastical blindness, and said, 'No! I will not permit my Church to become a sect. I will have, as far as possible, representatives among my clergy of all my national religious thought: I will have variety—not uniformity. Try to live together without quarrelling; fall back on primal principles; differ in ceremonies, in opinions, but agree in spirit and work for one end—the making of my nation better.'

The consequence is that they do work together on the whole remarkably well, in spite of the apparent violence of theological discussion. There is no body of men more united than the body of English clergy. There is a religious *esprit de corps* among them, which is of incalculable value to the cause of Christ, and which has a most radical influence for good on the inward as well as on the social life of the nation. Destroy the connection of the State with the Church and all that vanishes at once. All the several parties begin quarrelling, and split up into sects. The clergy cease to represent the sections, classes, and modes of religious thought within one living organism; and represent them only in sections, which have no inner bond of union and are set in opposition one to another. Divide us from the State, is now the cry of some. We know pretty well what would be the result of that. A clerical court of appeal would be established; we should have rigid limits laid down, and all possibility of com-

prehension would be overthrown. The idea of a true Church as I have ventured to sketch it—of a true unity in a Church—of a truly national spiritual parliament of clergy representing all the Christian thought of the nation—would be scattered to the winds, and we should have left behind, instead of the idea and the effort to attain it, the fact of a meagre, powerless, limited sect of Episcopalians with either a bigoted charter or a charter as colourless as the Encyclical of the Synod at Lambeth. I hope that day may be long protracted; I hope we may still endeavour to manifest to the world, and that more and more, the true idea of a Church—unity in variety, comprehensiveness with individual freedom.

This was the work of the Judicial Committee, and for it we owe them great gratitude. But it is now a serious question how far they have retreated on their path. I cannot but feel strongly that the Purchas Judgment is not in the interests of a comprehensive Church, and I am glad that there is a chance of its being reheard. It would be a fatal blow to the comprehensiveness of the Church if the Ritualists were forced to separate from it, and I should feel that the idea of the Church had received its death-blow. Should we drive out the Ritualists, we separate from the Church a body of clergy who represent a much larger variety of religious thought in England than is, I believe, suspected. Disagreeing as I do with the main principles of the movement, I feel strongly that we should lose very much which will hereafter be valuable, if we refuse to let it develop itself freely within the Church. There is that at the root of their sacramental theory which I wish were more earnestly looked into, and which will, as time and discussion free it of its error, come forth as an important truth, only in a form which will probably astonish the

Ritualists themselves. Their theory of the priesthood we may safely leave to the attrition of English thought. It will not stand it long. The symbolism of the service satisfies a religious want in many people; and if it does so, why should we reject it? Because we do not care for it, are we to decide for all England? We ought to have services to satisfy the hearts of all, else we cease to be comprehensive. The richer ritual, the ornamenting of churches, the singing, the dresses, appeal to the growing taste for art, and connect art itself with religion. By this means a large and increasing class of men are brought into close contact with the ordinances of the Church. In these ways and others Ritualism has done good; and are we to throw that all away because the cry of No Popery is again got up? I believe we should weaken the Church beyond conception if we banished this party, and strike a blow at the true unity of the Church of England which it could not recover.

And now to turn to the Voysey Judgment. Its ambiguity—an ambiguity I believe to be intentional, but which I could not accept in silence—saves it, I suppose, from the accusation of restricting freedom. It could not help condemning the appellant, for he contradicted fundamental doctrine, but it might have, I think, avoided using expressions which appear to impose a distinct Calvinistic meaning on the Articles. In the careless use of such expressions it has introduced a new element into the decisions of the Committee which naturally arouses suspicion. It is impossible not to say that far and wide this judgment has been thought to tread on the very verge of a denial of existing freedom. It seems to put into danger of its life that great idea of the Church which I have endeavoured to express.

I wish I could with more heart appeal to the laity to secure and foster for us and for themselves this essential difference of the Church we love. But the fact is that the Church has rather allowed this idea of it to be inferred from its history than stated it plainly, and men never know, they say, when she may not turn round and say, 'That is not my idea.'

'Look at these judgments,' many have said to me. 'We thought the Church intended to be comprehensive; here, both Ritualists and Liberals are in danger of being thrust out. In order to support the Church, we must have some assurance that the idea you describe is really its idea, and that it will not be reversed. We do not think, if these judgments restrict liberty as they seem to do, that there is any place for Ritualist or Liberal teaching in the Church. It is better to let the clergy loose altogether.' I do not think that the position of the Ritualist or the Liberal clergy is as impossible as these persons say. The Articles and the Prayer Book are much wider than many of the laity imagine, and a clearer knowledge of this would enable them to act more heartily with those who endeavour to keep the Church as open as it is at present.

There are others among the laity who will not support this large idea of a Church because it leaves room for great differences of teaching. They want a plain scheme of doctrine which they can give to their children, so that their daughters at least may say nothing to shock society. They want easy primers for themselves, so that they may have their religion in a form which they can lay aside and keep apart from their business life, and take down in a compact form when they want it.

There are others who are impatient with religious differences and discussions. 'Life is too real,' they say, 'for such things. We only want an impulse to a better life from our clergy. We wish to be done good to, not to be troubled.'

On the whole, there is a wide-spread but suppressed objection, even among the liberal-minded laity, to a free clergy who differ widely in opinion.

To these objections I shall make a general reply; not taking them one by one, but meeting them in the course of my remarks.

First,—A querulous indignation is expressed that the clergy do not know their own mind, and that the Church does not settle their differences. They ask why there should be so much talking to no purpose, as they say.

Passing by the retaliation possible to us, as we point to the endless warfare of political parties, and the incalculable amount of futile talk which they year by year expend, we maintain that our disputes are the necessary result of a free Church, as the disputes in Parliament are of a free Government; and that both, with all their evils, are better than the stagnation of thought and the loss of free development which follow on Imperialism either political or ecclesiastical. A Liberal ought to be ashamed to require of the clergy that silence which he would resent to the death if demanded of him by the State. Nor are the discussions in the Church any more useless than they are in Parliament. Both slowly bring truth out in clearer outline. Our constitutional liberty, so far as it has gone, has been the growth of more than a thousand years; and its progress has been the result of free debate and free struggle.

The growth of a noble Theology is strictly analogous. It

is the product of the debate and struggle of a free clergy; and the process is going on now, and must go on as the age advances. To fix the clergy down into a rigid mould, so as to stop discussion, would be as great a crime and as great a wrong to humanity as the silencing of political disputes.

A true Theology is as necessary to man as good government; and discussions, which seem almost puerile, are steps towards arriving at it at last—as many talks in Parliament, in the old days and at present, which seem dismal and fruitless, are steps towards the foundation of an ideal form of government.

I need not say the great excellence of a free State is that it develops the individuality of the citizen, and educates him politically by giving him personal responsibility. The excellence of a free Church is the same. Where there is liberty of opinion, within certain necessary limits—the limits being necessary for the sanity of the freedom—the intellectual individuality of the clergy is secured; their minds play freely round truths, and represent them in different forms. That is of the last importance for the slow elucidation of perfect truth. But as it produces vivid discussion—and discussion is the thing objected to—the clergy are said, as a body, not to know their own mind.

But each man, though he may not have made up his mind on all points, has made it up sufficiently to remain in a Church which has always permitted discussion. To know his own mind completely would be to deny himself any further progress. He claims the same right to disagree with other views and to change his own, when he sees more light, as the citizen of the State does in political matters, and he maintains that the genius of the Church of England, as the genius of the Constitution, is to allow of individuality and to encourage it.

Therefore, when the laity turn upon us, and demand that we should all agree, we reply, our liberty is as dear to us as it ought to be to you; and we refuse to surrender the freedom of individual opinion. Moreover, as long as we are the ministers of the laity for the purpose of laying religious truth before them, we refuse in their interest, and rejecting their ignorant demand, to lay truth before them in one form or to check the growth of their religious life by fixing it into one rigid mould.

Those who want cut-and-dried opinions, or to have their own opinions reproduced, and their minds never disturbed by contradiction, had better abandon the Church and join some particular form among the Nonconformists, where the congregation selects and dismisses the minister according to his conformity or not with its views. They will never, I trust, get what they want in the English Church. They will never, I trust, obtain from the English Church that which laymen have forced upon so many sects—an elaborate statement of the particular forms in which truths must be held.

The Liberal party believes that the Church states clearly certain large truths, but leaves to clergy and laity the liberty of finding for these truths the forms most fitted to develop each man's own spiritual life. It holds that a man's religious opinions about truth ought to be worked out for himself, and made his own by personal effort; and it turns aside with some natural pity from the man who wishes his religious system made up for him like a lozenge by his clergyman, and given to him to swallow whole.

These are the sort of persons who are irritated by any individual expression or free thought on the part of the clergy. Anything new distresses them, for it seems to say that they

must think about their religion, that two opinions are possible about a truth; and they turn round with feeble indignation, and, pointing sternly to the Articles and Prayer Book, and talking of the Act of Uniformity in profound ignorance of its intention, ask us if we are honest; if we have any reverence for our subscription; were not the Articles composed for the purpose of putting an end to disputes?

So they were. They were composed to stop disputes about truths which the Church held to be necessary to salvation, and especially about certain ecclesiastical quarrels. But they were not composed to stop discussion about the forms of truths. The composers were not so foolish as to imagine that the ebb and flow of human thought could be checked, and they left it sufficient freedom. And if such discussion had been left only in the hands of the clergy—a thing, of course, which we should reprobate, I only suppose it—it would never have reached the bitterness and coarseness which has so often characterised it. The clergy have, as a body, been sufficiently observant of courtesy and charity. It is the religious laity, with their accusations of dishonesty and their anonymous writings and anonymous persecution, who have added to the strife its acidity and its virulence. For one attack by a brother clergyman upon another you will find a hundred lay attacks upon him. For the clergy know that liberty of opinion is the genius of the Church, and that many different opinions have been held on separate truths by great churchmen whose names all men honour. The laity do not know these things, and they make mountains out of molehills. To all who are afflicted with the painful disease of an intolerance which demands absolute uniformity of opinion in the Church, there would be no medicine so effective as a course

of Church History. They would soon see that the largest differences of opinion have been permitted in the Church and prevailed; that, in the face of this fact, there is but one view to take of the Articles—that they were Articles composed with the intention of leaving opinion as free as possible; that wherever they could, consistently with the preservation of necessary truth, they chose to be ambiguous and refused to define or to limit; that judgment after judgment, delivered by the highest Court, has confirmed this view of them, and that this view of them is the only possible one, since it is incredible, in the midst of a body of men who have spoken on the whole so freely as the divines of the English Church, that rigid Articles could have lasted to the present day.

It is no mere shuffling and word-splitting, then, which enable Evangelicals, Anglicans, and Broad Church persons, of resolute and opposed opinions, to subscribe to the Articles, and to be content to live within them as long as they last. In holding that the Articles are indefinite with regard to opinions while they are definite with regard to main truths, they hold that they are carrying out the intention of the writers; that they are founding themselves on the repeated action of the law; and that they are true to the idea of the Church of England.

And the last decision of Parliament with regard to subscription confirms us in the opinion that this is the right view to take of the Articles and the Prayer Book, for it has changed, with the consent of all the Bishops of the Church, the form of subscription from an unfeigned assent and consent to the *doctrines* to an assent to the *doctrine* of the Articles and Prayer Book.

It is, therefore, ridiculous ignorance which talks of dis-

honesty, and is amazed at the differences of opinion in the Church. I say ridiculous—not in the case of those who care nothing or say nothing about the subject. Their ignorance is no more absurd than yours or mine on subjects which we do not profess. But ignorant persons, when they begin by inuendo and accusations of dishonesty, and then set up their opinion as a conscience for other men in a matter they have not studied, or under a pretence of public morality, are not only ridiculous, they are a subject of contempt.

And as to impatient requisition on the part of many that we should know our own mind and state it clearly, I partly do not and I partly do sympathise with it. I do not sympathise with the impatience. Every man who really cares for true views, and who has investigated truth with some precision, knows the difficulty of arriving at clear statements on any political or economical question, much more on any metaphysical or theological question, which will satisfy an accurate intellect. It is easy, on the other hand, to arrive at statements at which we wish to arrive, if we will shut our eyes to objections or modifications. I say nothing against persons who shut their eyes. It is in their character not to be able to see more than one thing. Some see only the good in any religious opinion, and are amazed and horrified at any objection to it; others see all the evil in it, and rush to overthrow it, blind with their anger—an anger they seriously believe to be moral, but the real root of which is a one-sided intellect. Both classes are equally irritating to the intellect and objectionable to the common sense of the searcher for true theories with regard to religious truths.

He who has read many things and followed the long labour of the mind of man for centuries on these topics and marked

its ceaseless change, its infinite variety; he who has himself felt with many men, and met, in all the phases of religious opinion, those who lived noble lives; he who has recognised the necessity of diverse channels of religious opinion to enable different characters to come to God; he who has seen portions of truth at the root of many theories which he considered erroneous, and feared to denounce them too violently lest he should lose the truth; he who has so constant a reverence for truth that he cannot bear to hastily formulate an opinion until he has looked upon every possible side of the question—he will sympathise with those clergymen who shrink from defining clearly their theological views, and prefer to preach that spiritual life of Christ which they *know* to be right—he will not be impatient with those who do not define, because they have a minute reverence for truth.

At the same time I sympathise with those who, making allowances for the difficulties, ask for some definition of what we mean. After long examination, the work of the mind upon truths naturally clothes itself in some intellectual form, and then there should be no hesitation in declaring that form. We ought to be able to express clearly the mode in which we receive theological truths. It is of great practical use to have a formula for each thing we believe; it gives a standing ground for further investigation; in itself it promotes and stimulates investigation. We bring new facts before it, and ask how it agrees with them. It awakens criticism, and we hear objections which may give us new light; and, at least, it takes us out of that vagueness with which the liberal party have been, with some justice, reproached. The time has come when outspokenness is necessary if we are to hold our own. We ought, I think, to have a theology. We ought to be able

to afford outlines which each person in our congregation, if they accept them, can shade for themselves.

But there is one thing which, in defining our modes of receiving theological truths, ought to be clearly understood—that we do not claim any permanence for those modes. We hold them, but we hold them in readiness to give them up, on reception of new light. There are few dangers greater than the danger of falling in love with any theory of a truth which we have worked out, and of attempting to bind it on ourselves or others. Truths are eternal, but every form of them is transient. The intellectual forms in which we cast them are subject to necessary changes, as our own spiritual development advances, and as the moral sense and knowledge of the world advances. If one believes in the progress of revelation, one must also hold that truth must be continually reclothing itself. He who defines, defines therefore only for the present and for the practical use of the present, and he must be ready to abandon one definition for another if he find it checking his own progress, or at variance with newly-discovered truth. But at the same time he must not despise or denounce past forms, which have done their work in their own day, and by which men have lived and laboured well. He lays them by, but he lays them by lovingly and reverently. He places his useless form upon the shelf—as he binds and lays by a book which he has loved and drained dry—for it forms part of the history of his own growth, and is part of the history of the world's religious growth. I cannot endure the abuse which is lavished by some on bygone religious systems, nor the virulence with which some turn upon their early beliefs: it is the feeling of the mob, and not of cultivated men. It is like those furious persons who, indignant with

an exhausted monarchy, violated St. Denis and scattered to the winds the bones of the kings who had made France great in the times of old.

And now, in conclusion, a clergy who can speak with freedom is of importance to the laity who adhere to the Church, and even to those outside it. It is said that the late judgment militates against this freedom. If so, it certainly is part of the duty of the laity to take care that this liberty should not be infringed, and to claim, with distinctness, that the alleged modifications in the judgment should have their full value, to let the clergy understand that they are not considered dishonest when they take advantage of those modifications.

Many of you wish to remain connected with the Church of England. It has to you the deep interest of a great historical past. Great names and great deeds belonging to it have been woven into the whole web of our history. No man of imagination but would feel that in disconnecting himself from the Church he had severed himself from a great history, and few of the sorrows of the imagination could be more bitter than that. No man could separate from the Church without feeling how sad it was to lose all the pleasure and all the strength inherent in belonging to a great and united corporation, every member of which, in the midst of many differences, acts together at certain points and shares in one feeling of affection. There is none who would not regret to lose, or to be forced to put aside, a thousand dear associations, and to live alone, in the midst of memories which had changed from being tender and sweet to harshness and bitterness. To separate from the Church would be to separate from an organisation in which freedom seemed to have its truest home; freedom

within limits which saved it from intemperance of expression and opinion, which preserved its intellectual sanity, which secured a certain amount of culture, which by an insensible restraint of sensational opinions gave religious progress permanence and promoted its acceptance.

But if the freedom which the clergy have enjoyed should now be taken from them, and definitions unheard of before imposed on them, they cannot, in the interests of truth, abide with her whose features are no longer those of a mother but of a step-mother. And if they leave, and you agree with their love of liberty, your place is also no longer in the Church. Truth should be as dear to you as it is to your ministers. Whether this judgment really limits freedom as it has never before been limited in the Church, or does not, is a question which ought to be as important to you as it is to us. It ought to be known, and known publicly and clearly, that you consider any new limitation of freedom, any narrowing of the boundaries, as of the last importance with regard to the existence of the Church, and as a violation of the whole genius of the Church of England. The Liberal clergy ought to feel that they have the support of liberally-minded men in their effort to keep the Church open and on a level with the knowledge of the day.

II

THE ATONEMENT.

My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?—MATT. XXVII. 46.

IN these words, the central expression of the theory that the Atonement was made by God the Father inflicting on the Son the punishment due to our sins, and in this manner satisfying His justice, has been found by those who hold that view. It has been thought, but I think without sufficient reason, that the following phrase in the late judgment imposes that view upon the Church: 'The question is, whether it be or not consistent with the Articles of Religion to deny that Christ bore the punishment due to our sins, or suffered in our stead. We think that to deny this statement *without any qualification* is inconsistent with the plain meaning of the second and fifteenth Articles of Religion.' And again: 'It is not consistent with such statements (statements in these Articles) to aver without any qualification that He did not bear the punishment due to our sins, nor suffer in our stead.'

These phrases, twice repeated, are the phrases which have caused us some natural fear lest the extreme theory of the Atonement mentioned above should demand our assent, or indeed lest any definite theory be demanded of us at all. They have been taken to define the mode in which we must receive the doctrine that Christ made an atonement for our sins—a thing unattempted by the Articles, and never yet attempted

by the English Church, for the phrases themselves are an addition to the Articles and the Prayer Book, neither of them once occurring in these books.

We have no objection to say that we can put a meaning on those terms, and say that Christ bore the hatred and cruelty and scorn which were sins of men, and that in bearing the evils which were the result of the sins of men, such as pain, infirmity, and death, He may be said to have borne the punishment due to our sins, and this may be a qualified explanation such as that alluded to in the judgment. But those terms, as commonly used in theology, have a distinct meaning connected with a special theory of the Atonement, and mean that God inflicted on Christ, being absolutely innocent, the punishment which He would otherwise have inflicted on man, and that His justice being thus satisfied, He forgave man, and that in this sense Christ suffered instead of us. I cannot believe that the words of the judgment intend to demand our assent to this theory, especially as it is held by only a section in the Church. And it is as well to state directly, that this meaning and the whole of the theory, commonly called the forensic theory of the Atonement, I emphatically deny and repudiate. But since the judgment, though making use of these suspicious terms, speaks of qualifications, and condemns the appellant because he did not try to interpret, but denied in any sense the Articles which speak of Christ's satisfaction and the necessity of that satisfaction; and since I neither deny, but assert that the sacrifice of Christ was a 'propitiation,' and a necessary propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and interpret that and other phrases within, as I consider, the fair meaning of the Articles, I am willing to repose within the ambiguity of the judgment, only I desire openly to claim that

ambiguity as permitting me altogether to deny the theory commonly connected with the phrases introduced into the judgment.

How Christ suffered *for us*, as the Prayer Book says (not instead of us), how He bore the punishment *of our sins* (not due to our sins), in what sense God was reconciled to Humanity and Humanity to God, in Christ, are subjects on which I shall endeavour to state my view this morning in connection with a general treatment of the text, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?'

We are told that at the hour of the greatest crisis in the history of man, when the redemption of the race was born out of the womb of suffering love, darkness crept over all the land in which the work was wrought. From the sixth to the ninth hour, from midday till three o'clock, the cross was veiled, and no voice came from the Saviour. At last, a sudden cry broke the silence: 'About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'

There is no need to assume that this physical darkness was miraculous—we are not told that it was so; but if it were so, the time when it occurred might in itself *tend* to make it credible. The understanding will rebel against its being miraculous, as it rebels against all miracles, but in the region of feeling and imagination one would almost expect that nature would reflect, as if in sympathy, the darkness of pain and sorrow which filled the soul of Him who was not only a man but essential humanity. That there should be such a harmony between the physical and spiritual universe, that great events in the latter should be attended by remarkable things in the former, is not only not unthinkable, but seems

to possess a kind of antecedent fitness to the imagination. The poets have always felt this harmony and expressed it; and though we can base no proof of any relation between the spiritual and the natural worlds upon this feeling, yet it has its power, and may have its meaning. It is not always the scientific men who see clearest; nor is their judgment worth more than that of any other man out of their particular sphere. They do not escape the fate of other men, who, in devoting themselves exclusively to one subject, gain in it a microscopic sight, which, however hard they try, cannot afterwards be used as a telescope. 'There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in their philosophy;' and Hamlet, who looks upwards through the mist, may catch glimpses of secrets denied to Horatio, who, with clear vision and in a dry light, examines things upon the ground.

We may yet find it philosophically true that miracles are contained in the order of the world, and that the old statement that a miracle is a violation or a suspension of the laws of nature, or even an immediate operation of a higher law, is absurd. We may yet find it true that there is a profounder connection between the movement of human progress and the movement of the natural universe than we think, and that a miracle such as the Resurrection is simply an event, exceptional, it is true, but as much a part of order as the rising of the sun.

But the darkness which fell around the cross has all its interest to us, because it symbolises for us the darkness in the soul of Christ. The question whether the gloom of Judea was miraculous or not passes away when we look upon that awful Figure uplifted between heaven and earth, the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. For what

interest to us has the greatest possible physical event in comparison with the tale of one hour's intense human feeling? We have followed for some years the slow and wonderful discovery of the constitution of the sun, with an interest proportioned to the magnitude of the scientific triumph; but great as it has been, it does not move any one among us, either intellectually or morally, so deeply as the story of the death of Socrates. It is only man that profoundly interests man; and the triteness of the saying does not make it less true nor less applicable to the solemn scene on which we gaze, as we read the history of the Passion.

To many it may not be so; but to me, at least, this hour is the centre of human history. There, in Christ, all humanity was concentrated; there all humanity suffered and sacrificed itself; there all humanity reconciled itself to God; there God saw all humanity die to sin and reconciled Himself to it; there all humanity conquered death in a last struggle with it; there the whole race united itself to the life of God, for Christ was not only a man, He was humanity. All the past of mankind had brought Him to this hour; all the future of mankind was anticipated and held in Him in that hour; all the present of mankind centred in Him then.

What passed in those supreme hours of darkness, when all that was essential in human nature met in struggle in the person of Christ, with all that evil which, unessential to human nature, had yet entered into it, and divided it from God; and having met it, freed human nature from its power, and asserted man before God as now holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sin—what passed in that mortal contest it is not for us to conceive too rashly or express too recklessly. But we may imagine something of its sublime

and terrible pain from the cry with which it ended—'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'

But before we speak of it one remark is necessary. I have spoken of Christ as essential humanity, and the phrase, though representing a vital truth, may seem to some to remove His existence into an ideal world, to make Him less a man in conceiving Him as abstract humanity. That is not my meaning. He was not less, but more a man, because He was universal. He was not less, but more individual, because He took into Himself collective humanity. In identifying Himself with the whole race, He did not become less able to be the personal friend of S. John or S. Peter, or to feel with the particular joy or sorrow of you or me, but more able. He was not less *a* man because He was *the* man, but more. So in this cry, we hear not only the utterance of all humanity, but the utterance of the human soul of one man. It is not only the whole race which speaks and acts through and in Christ, it is also Christ Himself. To compare a small thing to a great, there are times when, clothing in words the result of our personal experience, we know that we are also saying that which is true of every man and woman that ever lived. At that moment, when we, through the thought of our personal experience, pass away from the thought of it into the thought of the same experience as belonging to the race, and lose our own particular feeling in a universal feeling, are we more or less conscious of our individuality? More! nay, at the very moment when one would say we have lost personality, we find that we have truly gained it.

Therefore I say that this cry of Christ's, as all His acts, was at once individual and universal; was the cry of a man and the cry of humanity. As the first, as a personal utter-

ance, it comes home to the sympathies of us all. We mark its exquisite truth to particular human nature. Seven days and nights Job kept silence, wrestling with his pain. At last the inward war became too terrible for silence, and Job opened his mouth and cursed his day. Many of us know the truth of this—know that, however long we conceal our pain, the hour comes when a touch will make it leap into expression. This was the case with Christ. The dreadful cry broke at last from His lips. Unable to bear the battle in silence, desirous to realise His sorrow, in hope of human sympathy, He cried with a loud voice.

There is then no stoicism in Christianity. Our Master did not say to pain, thou art *not* pain. He did not bid us by His example ignore it, nor think it unworthy of a man to express his suffering. He accepted it as the necessary path to good, and in expressing it He conquered it. He took it as from a Father's hand, and spoke of it to His Father as to one who would not take it away, but would show hereafter that it was joy.

It is inhuman to say that pain does not exist, and to demand that we should say nothing when the nerves of body or soul are torn. No religion which says that can be a religion for man. It is deep comfort when we feel that God accepts the fact of pain and desires our expression of it, and tells us that it is necessary but that it is redemptive. We feel, then, that we have a human religion, a God who recognises our nature. Secure of Him, we can then conquer the curse of pain.

Again, still speaking of the purely personal aspect of this utterance of Christ's, observe the way in which, unconsciously, He identified His suffering with that of another man. He used the words of the Psalmist to express his own suffering. Cen-

turies before He came, men had borne the same pain in kind as He was bearing now. One of them had expressed it in passionate words. Christ, enduring the same pain in degree infinitely greater, used the same old words, identifying Himself in doing so with ordinary men. What had sufficed them as expression sufficed Him. I think few things have ever brought the Saviour more nearly home to men's hearts as one of themselves than this unconscious usage of the words of a Hebrew poet.

It was then a man who spoke these words? But we are told that He was also Divine, that the Word is incarnate in Jesus. This is the doctrine of the Church of England, and I have often stated my belief in it. But the question at present is how far, at the time when these words were spoken, had the Divine nature become at one with the human nature of Christ. I would suggest that if God had in all His fulness, at this time, united Himself to Christ, so that the Divine and human natures were entirely blended *then* into one Human Divine Person, Christ could neither have suffered nor struggled with evil, nor died, and the whole story becomes fictitious; and it is in avoiding this dreadful conclusion, which seems to rob us of all comfort, that men have been driven into believing in Christ as being nothing more than a sinless man. I suggest another view. I can conceive that, though His union with God was from the moment of His birth potentially His, as the whole growth of the oak is in the acorn, yet that the communication of the Divine Word to the Man Christ Jesus was a gradual communication, that it went on step by step with the gradual perfecting of His humanity, that, for example, in the temptation in the wilderness, the human will of Christ met all the temptations to sin which

could be offered to Him on the side of the spirit of the world, struggled with them in a real struggle and conquered them, and that *then* His human nature having made itself so far forth victorious and perfect, received such a communication of the Divine nature as raised Him above all possibility from that time of being tempted by the evil spirit of the world. We certainly see this in the history. That particular struggle is never renewed. He never had any effort to make in putting aside *that* kind of temptation. But the contest with the evil which specially attacks the spirit, with especially the essence of such evil, the desire to do our own will, in the gratification of self at the expense of others—this, with which He was always being tempted from without, for no feeling of it arose within, had yet to be fought with and overcome in a last battle. This crisis came in the garden of Gethsemane. All possibility of the evil which tempts the inner life was brought to bear upon Him from without, in the temptation which was then offered to Him, of at the last shrinking back from the consequences of His work, and saving Himself to the ruin of those He came to save. According to the view suggested, He would conquer that temptation with the weapons of humanity, not of Divinity, and when that was over, *then* His human nature having made another step towards its perfection would be adequate to receive a further communication of the Divine Word which would raise Him beyond the power of ever being tempted by any spiritual evil. The spiritual union between God and man, ever, as I said, potentially His, would have now reached, through a growth unbroken by any reception of evil, its perfect development. 'The Captain of our salvation was now made perfect through suffering.' But no communication of the Divine Word would have been

made as yet to His human nature, which would remove it out of the ordinary physical and mental conditions of humanity, except so far as power had been given to Him by His Father; except so far as perfect spiritual purity and clearness exalted and intensified His intellect and heart, so that His insight into human hearts and His power upon them were necessarily greater, almost infinitely greater, than those of any man who ever lived. We cannot measure, cannot comprehend, the actual power which sinlessness can give, not only such power as is expressed in the words 'He knew what was in man,' but actual power in the doing of acts beyond the ordinary power of man. But, leaving that fruitful subject of speculation, the view we suggest would allow us to say—and the history tends to confirm it—that Christ was not at this time a partaker of the absolute attributes of God. He was not omniscient, omnipotent, unlimited by time or space, impassible.

With regard to knowledge, to suffering, to the desires of the body, He would then be as we are, except so far as absolutely holy humanity modifies these things. There would not have been as yet that communication of the Divine Word to Him which would free Him from pain and death and the struggle of human nature with these things. As a perfectly holy man, but in entire spiritual union with the Divine Word, He would meet the dark power of death upon the cross. When that was overcome by His human will, when in dying he conquered death, then at His Resurrection and Ascension the union of the Divine Word to a perfect human nature would take place, and we should find in Him perfect God and perfect Man.

According, then, to this idea, we need not be troubled with the thought that theology imposes on us a fiction in asking us

to believe in the reality of the sufferings upon the cross. They were borne by a man, but by a man who was, through the spiritual union of His human nature with the spiritual nature of the Divine Word, essential and perfect Humanity, a man, and yet the Man.

And now having endeavoured to remove, so far as I am able, this theological difficulty, and having already spoken of this cry as the personal cry of a man like ourselves, what are its aspects if we consider it as spoken by one who was essential humanity, who felt Himself then as the impersonation of the whole race, who spoke to God and acted before God as the whole of humanity in one man?

First, in those words, He threw Himself into the whole passionate sense which the race has had of its being forsaken by God. By a sublime act of self-forgetful love He passed *through the channel* of His personal sorrow away from it altogether, and identified Himself with the same sorrow as felt by all mankind. All the long spiritual pain of all the race, when in contact with trials of every kind, with scorn of men and bitter death, it has felt itself forsaken of God: all the agony of those thoughts when betrayed of friends we have doubted of eternal love, when cruelty, injustice, or violence have made us disbelieve in any absolute goodness, when wars and their miseries, and tyranny and its curse, and the destruction wrought on miserable men by the forces of nature have made us think ourselves abandoned to the caprice of evil or the cruelty of fate—all that has ever made man feel himself abandoned, forgotten, forsaken by God—into the whole sense of this vast human suffering Christ, losing the consciousness of Himself and of His own pain, through the intensity of His sympathy with us, threw Himself—and so realising it as His

own, offered it up to the pity and love of God, and cried, as the expression of all this sorrow of mankind to God, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken *Me*, forsaken Man?'

This was bearing our infirmities and carrying our sicknesses. In this way He took into Himself our suffering and suffered for it; in this way He represented in that hour unto the Father, by means of the perfect self-forgetfulness of love, all the spiritual pain of the world's absence from God.

But here I observe two things. First, that we must carefully distinguish the feeling of being forsaken from the reality. Man, having separated himself from God, feels abandoned of God: of that there are a thousand proofs. But the reality is that man has never been forsaken by God, though God was displeased with man. To be displeased with one's children and to chastise them is not necessarily to cast them out, even with us on earth, much less with our Father in heaven. And the glory of Christ is that He recognised that truth as man, even when by self-forgetfulness He had thrown Himself completely into the feeling of the race and suffered through sympathy its pain. He knew that man was not forsaken by God at the very moment when He realised the feeling of humanity that it was forsaken. Speaking then as the voice of the race, He used that paradox, '*My* God, *my* God, why hast Thou forsaken Me, forsaken humanity?'

Secondly, observe this point of difference. Our pain of this kind is mixed with weakness and doubt; it breaks into rebellion, it drifts into sin; man feels forsaken, and believing he is *absolutely* forsaken, passes into utter disbelief in God. God, looking then on man in this awful distress, saw man broken down by it and faithless in it.

But now He saw man in the dying Christ feeling all this

sorrow, feeling it as His own, and yet not broken down by it; still faithful, still unsubdued in spirit by it, still asserting God as righteousness and love, still claiming Him as *His* God; the strange paradox realised of man in agony at feeling Himself forsaken, and yet believing that He was not forsaken—'*My* God, *my* God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'—and, seeing this, God saw His ideal of humanity on this side of it realised, God saw man victorious over the power of this trial to lead Him into sin, God saw man in the depth of suffering at one with Himself. God saw and was well pleased. His ideal of man was realised: and, uniting Himself to man in uniting Himself to Christ, He may be said to have reconciled Himself to man. For what is the reconciliation of the Father to us, theologically speaking? It is found not in the supposed satisfaction which God feels in having satisfied His justice by exacting from the innocent the punishment due to the guilty; but in God recognising in Christ as the perfect Man, humanity as entirely at one with His life through a finished life of sacrifice. With such a humanity God could unite Himself in all His fulness. With existing humanity God, though pitying and loving it as a Father, could not, because of its sin, unite Himself *fully*. He loved it, came to it, moved in it, inspired it, educated it, but He never could be perfectly at one with it till all sin had disappeared from it. That was an imperative of His nature. But when humanity in Christ had fulfilled all righteousness and displayed itself as wholly at one with God's life of self-sacrifice, God was then able to unite Himself to it, to take it up into Himself. In this way Christ reconciled the Father to us, as the Article says. And now—still embodying infinite thoughts in finite words which seem to reduce the meaning of the thoughts—God sees in Christ the ideal

humanity, the whole race as sinless, as at one with Himself. And it follows that if Christ has taken into Himself the whole race, it is taken into God, and must hereafter be brought up to that ideal of it which now exists in God. God, to whom there is no time, sees now that which the whole race shall be and accounts it righteous in Christ, sees the whole race redeemed. The whole race is by right justified. But the working out of that, in fact, is a matter of time. In many ways and through many ages of education men will be led to recognise that which they are in idea and to fulfil it in reality by uniting themselves to Christ by faith and in love. The atonement is finished in idea. God and man are at one. But the realisation of that idea in actual man is the work of the Holy Spirit in the succession of ages. And when it is finished, when all the race is made in the likeness of God, then shall the actual humanity be equal to the ideal, the whole race be at one with itself as it now exists in Christ. Not one can be lost to God, for all are now in God.

Once more. The cry was not only the expression of this human sorrow and of its being borne by Him—it was also the expression of His endurance, as representative of the race, of all the burden of our sins. The innocent suffered through love the pain which comes of sin.

This is, of course, the theological difficulty. Let me explain, if possible, my view of it.

During those awful hours Christ was, as perfect man and sensitive in proportion to His perfect humanity, face to face with death, and with death accompanied with torture, with loneliness, with undeserved bitterness of enemies, with the sense of wrong. It was impossible for Him not to realise that that which had nailed Him there was the sinfulness of man.

It was impossible for Him not to feel that all this pain and misery and death itself which He was suffering was caused on earth by sin, and that these things were the judgment of God on account of sin. But at the same time He must have also felt that He Himself was sinless. No consciousness of personal sin, no remorse passed across His soul. He was suffering the natural penalties of sin, and yet He knew that He did not deserve them, and feeling this—feeling at one with God in spirit, and yet enduring the consequences of man's evil—how could the cry help coming to his lips, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' This was the personal cry, and this we reverently suppose its cause.

Then came, we dimly conjecture, a further experience. As in the former case, so now, he passed through the channel of His personal feeling, away from it, by the intense realisation of love, into union with the feeling of all mankind on account of sin. He passed from feeling as a man to feeling as the representative Man. He realised, through His own death, the sense of the death and pain and woe of all the world, and with it the sin of all the world as their cause. He lost all thought of self in awful realisation of the sin of the whole world. Innocent Himself, He felt the agony and remorse of man for sin, not in His own soul, God forbid, but through His horror of it as a righteous Being, and by His infinite sympathy and pity with the misery of man on account of it. And just because He was sinless, and because He was untouched with remorse or penitence, and because He was at one with God in perfect purity, did the woe and wonder of our sin fall with unutterable heaviness upon Him in that awful hour. He bore through this transference of Himself, and, in sympathy with us, the woe of the guilt of man, and though guiltless

Himself cried to God, as the voice of all humanity, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me, forsaken Man?' It was thus He bore our sins; it was thus He may be said to have endured their punishment. But, remember, in this explanation the bearing of sins was coincident with perfect sinlessness; indeed, it was only perfect and divine love which could have realised them in this manner. And the enduring of their punishment, or rather of their results, was not imposed upon Him by His Father in order to satisfy vindictive justice, as some theologies have said: it was voluntarily assumed in perfect love to Man. And, in distinction from the theory which says that He bore His Father's wrath in that dread hour, we, holding this view, believe that on Him rested at that moment the entire fulness of His Father's love. God saw on earth the perfect image of His own life; and at the very instant when some say He turned away His face from the innocent because He accounted Him guilty, the Father beheld the Son absolutely righteous; and righteous especially in this, that He had then realised, through perfect sympathy and loss of self, the misery of the world's sin. God saw, in the absolute self-sacrifice which enabled Christ to lose Himself in love of man, and to bear the burden of the sin of man in passionate sympathy with the awfulness of the burden, the highest reach of human virtue, the highest ideal of human sacrifice realised; saw human nature in this especially at one with His own nature, and was well pleased with this image of humanity; united Himself in perfect sympathy to it; and as He took into Himself, and into union with Himself, the Humanity of Christ, so He took into Himself and into unity with Himself the Humanity which Christ represented. This is the reconciliation of God

to man, the forgiveness of man's sin by God. This is the objective side of the Atonement.

The same things follow as followed before. The whole race, being in Christ, is now by right redeemed, righteous, at one with God. But it is not redeemed, righteous, or at one with God in fact. It is still struggling with sin, still wandering away from its inheritance, still rejecting its rights. But that which has been done in God, is done for ever; and man—every soul of man—*must* become in fact what they are now by right. And though no thought may count the years, yet all humanity shall at last be made coincident with that ideal of it which exists in God in Christ. That seems to me, from the revelation, an absolute necessity, now secured for us in the nature of our Father. It is now done; it has only to be elaborated here in the spiritual progress of the race, and hereafter in the progress, through stage after stage, of each man's education.

It was then—to gather up once more what I have said—it was then self-sacrificing love, which, losing self in the very hour when self might have made a fair demand, in the very hour when mortal pain and the sense of human injustice and rejected tenderness might have formed some portion of Christ's thoughts—which made atonement: it was then that Christ identified Himself with the pain of humanity, pitied it, and loved man more deeply for His pain; it was then that He lost sense of all He suffered from the sin of man, and entered into the horror of sin itself and the misery which followed it, in awful pity and holy love, and, sinless, said to God, 'I die for love of them.' It was then that the Father saw man perfect. It was this self-sacrificing love, this life in others, this loss of His own particular Being in the love of

all, which made atonement. God could not help uniting Himself to that. The divine Word filled the Humanity of Christ, became utterly at one with it, and in becoming at one with it, became in idea, and will become hereafter in fact, at one for ever with Mankind.

III

THE ATONEMENT.

PSALM iii. 1, 2, 3, 4.

THIS is a morning psalm, as the fourth, which follows it, is an evening psalm. There is a high probability that the tradition which refers them both to the time when David fled from Absalom's advance to Mahanaim is a true tradition. The third psalm would then belong to the first morning after that on which David left Jerusalem, and the fourth to the evening following.

David left Jerusalem early in the morning. He passed through the outskirts, over the brook Kidron, and took the ascent of Olivet, amid the loud wailing of the people of the city. He reached the mountain-top at noon; there he met Hushai, and sent him back to confound the counsel of Ahitophel. As he descended the rugged path on the other side, there rained upon his head the stones and curses of Shimei, adding their store of sorrow to that which was too much. It was not till evening fell that he reached the ford of Jordan.

There he snatched a short slumber, while he waited for the news of how things were going in Jerusalem. 'I laid me down and slept.' At midnight he was roused with the message—'All is safe for a time; the pursuit is delayed; get over the river at once to Mahanaim.' David sprang to his

feet, his old energy returning. 'I rose up again, for the Lord sustained me;' and at break of day they had all reached the other side in safety.

Then, as the sun rose, making into a blaze of glory all the dew-drenched western bank—seeming like God's summons to activity—David's impulsive, poet heart began to thrill with gratitude and courage, and this psalm rushed in a moment to his lips.

If this be true, a vivid interest draws us to the psalm. It is the unpremeditated expression of the passionate feeling of a great man's heart at a great crisis in his life. We seem to look for a moment into his inmost heart.

It is in times like these that we see character. Men are true when passion is profound. The first agony of sorrow wears no mask. Anger, at its fiercest, lays the secrets of the heart bare. Fear is a magic glass, through which we see the long-hidden evil or weakness of the soul. Joy at deliverance has the same power.

This is still more true when the character is impulsive, and the impulsiveness is under the power of a strong will. Such a character had David—impulsive, always ready to gratify or express the feelings of the moment, but capable now and then of holding them in with the steadiest curb. When the curb was withdrawn by the will—then—only observe how most of his psalms burst out with a cry, like the leap forward of a beautiful wild animal held in bonds too long.

And David's passion and David's impulsiveness, now at their height, swelled by the repression of twenty-four hours —swelled by an awful sorrow—swelled by a terrible anger—were suddenly let loose by the sense of safety. He looked round upon his followers and rejoiced; he felt the exhilaration

of the morning; he saw the sun rise, like hope, after a night of storms. Silence seemed shameful in that moment, and the psalm arose into life.

How the words come rushing like waters. 'Jehovah!'—mark the cry at the beginning—'how many are become my oppressors; many are they that rise against me. Many say of my soul—"No help has he in God."'

But yesterday a king, and now an exile; only yesterday in his own city—the people weeping for love and sorrow round him! What were they doing now? And David heard, in the ear of his imagination, the shouts which welcomed Absalom, the darling of the people—'The king is dead! long live the king!'—fancied the sneer and scoff which circulated among the rebel officers; caught the sleek murmur of Ahitophel's insidious, hateful voice, and saw with startling distinctness among the crowd the face of Shimei sharpened with hate. He realised the thought which gleamed in every eye and hung on every lip—'They say of my soul,' he cried, 'there is no help for him in God.'

Such is the judgment of the world. *Misfortune means God's anger.* Is that judgment true? That is the first question the psalm suggests.

We answer, first, that God is never angry in our sense of the word. Sacred indignation at evil is inseparable from His Being, because it is the natural repulsion of holiness from sin; but from this we must, so far as we can in thought, remove all suspicion of angry passion. It is all but impossible for us to do this, for it is so rarely in our lives that we feel unmixed indignation. Jealousy steps in; sometimes fear, sometimes a wish to display, sometimes wounded vanity, sometimes selfish motives—till at last, or in a moment, indignation is

degraded into violence, and violent passion brings about revenge.

It is owing to this almost necessary inability to conceive pure indignation that the idea of God's wrathful anger has taken such lodgment in the heart of men. Few superstitions—I call it such, for it is born of ignorance and fear—have ever done more harm in the world. It lay at the root of the popular cry which forced persecution on the Roman governors; the gods were jealous of their honour. It has lain at the root of all persecutions—of the cruelties of the Inquisitors, who attributed to God the desire to revenge Himself upon the Jews, and the nursing of endless rancour against heretics; of the persecution of those sects who represented God as vindictive, vain, and touchy. It has lain at the root of the perishing doctrine of eternal punishment.

It is *the* superstition which the Church of Christ ought above all to cast out now. It is the thing above all else on which we want clear notions.

How shall I best explain it, illustrate it? What is God's indignation? It is love doing justice. Suppose that you saw in the streets a brutalised man beating a woman: your feeling would be indignation, you would inflict punishment; but there would be, for the most part feelings of contempt, of violent anger, of horror, combined with your indignation. In vindicating the woman's cause there would be no pity for the man. That is anger doing justice. But the indignation of God would punish as severely as you, more severely in the end; but there would be no anger in the sense of passion; and there would be infinite pity, compassion, and love for the man—more so than even for the woman. 'So lost, so brutalised, so fallen—my son, I must redeem him.' This is love doing justice; this

is the indignation of God. The offender is punished, the sin is abhorred, but the offender is not detested; the tie of Fatherhood is not dissolved, the necessity of saving the lost is not forgotten. 'You have done this wrong,' God says to you and me; 'you must suffer for it. I am a consuming fire to your evil. But I do not love you less; My love is shown in insisting on the punishment. For the pain points to the disease, and says to you, "Get rid of the evil thing, or you die."'

Moreover, anger like ours is capricious, easily roused, easily lost; punishes too much or too little; does not fit the punishment to the guilt so that it may seem natural to the guilty and touch the conscience, but takes whatever punishment lies next to hand. Want of justice, want of balancing all the motives and circumstances on both sides, want of natural fitness, characterise the inflictions of our anger; for it has no time for all this slow work, and no thoughtfulness. Let it wait to work or think, and it ebbs away like Esau's, or quickens into revengefulness like Saul's.

There is an absolute freedom from all these faults in the indignation of God, and it is this which gives it its awfulness. It is based on law—or, I should say, on the eternal truthfulness of God to Himself. If God ceased to punish wrongdoing He would cease to be God; if He did not apportion the exact measure of punishment to the wrong, making it the natural result, and felt as such, of the sin; if He did not see the wrong in all its excuses and all its aggravations, and make both tell, and be felt as telling in the punishment, He could not be the just Omniscient Being we conceive Him to be. If He acted hastily, and without full thought of the results of the punishment upon the character of the person punished, we could not believe in His love.

It is not, remember, that indignation is modified by love, or love modified by justice; there are no argumentative elements in God's nature—things which plead and reply, and replead and re-reply within Him. If we had more reverence for God's Unity we should be more indignant at representations of Him which make His heart like a court of law, in which His attributes are advocates for and against the criminal. His love is His justice, His justice is His love, His mercy is both love and justice, and His indignation is the inevitable expression (according to the unalterable nature of His Being) of his character in contact with sin in the persons of His children. It is punishment; but it must be merciful as well as just punishment.

So far, then, the fact of misfortune coming to a man proves that he has erred against some law, and that, in consequence, God is indignant with him. It may be only his own unconscious transgression of some physical law, or it may be that his parents have transgressed some law of health. In that case the indignation of God carries with it no moral blame; it is simply the expression of law. It may be that he has erred against his own sense of the moral law and that remorse has followed; or that he has knowingly broken some physical law by excess and that disease has followed. In that case he recognises himself that the spiritual or the temporal misfortune proves that God is indignant with him; but it does not prove that God has ceased to love him—least of all, that He has forgotten him. It proves the exact contrary. Wherever there is indignation, there must be His love; wherever there is punishment, there must be His remembrance.

The cry of the Jewish world—'there is no help for David in God'—was hopelessly wrong; and the really noble and grand

thing, as we shall see, was, that in the very midst of the punishment David knew that they were wrong.

But there is another answer to the question—Does misfortune prove God's anger? In the case of the guilty it proves, as we have seen, God's indignation. But in the case of the innocent it proves God's love for the race. Suppose an innocent man suffers; what has often been the verdict of the world? It says: 'There is a crime beneath the seeming innocence, or he would not suffer.' That was the judgment of the friends of Job, and the Book of Job gives the Old Testament answer to this blind opinion. The complete answer is in the death and suffering of Christ. It has been written there for all the world to read that its stupid maxim is wrong. Suffering does *not* always prove God's anger, nor prove the sufferer's sin. If increase of love were possible, never did the Father so deeply love the Son as at the hour of the Cross; if increase of righteousness were possible, never was the Son more sinless than in that hour of human agony and apparent defeat.

Nevertheless it is astonishing how strongly this superstitious view of God's anger clings to the minds of men. It has vitiated the whole view taken of the Atonement by large numbers of the Church of Christ. They are unconsciously influenced by the thought that where there is suffering there must be sin. The Cross is suffering; therefore somewhere about the sufferer there must be sin, and God must be angry. But Christ had no sin; then what does the suffering mean? Their suppressed premiss, the maxim, puts them into a sad dilemma.

At last light comes to them—not spiritual but logical light—and the thing is clear. Man sins, and sin against an Infinite

Being is infinite, and deserving of infinite punishment. A debate takes place in the nature of God. Justice says, 'I must punish. I will take the law.' Mercy replies, 'Have pity!' 'No,' answers Justice; 'I must have my bond.' Then Love steps in. 'Is there no way to make mercy and justice at one? The Son of God is infinite. Let Him bear as man the infinite punishment; let the sins of the race lie upon Him; let Justice exact from Him the forfeited bond; let God's anger be poured upon His head. Then, Justice being satisfied, Mercy can have her gracious way.' And this was done, and the Cross is no exception to the maxim—Where there is suffering there is God's anger. I do not say that this theory was consciously elaborated out of the maxim, but it is certainly its child. It wears on its brow the traces of its worldly paternity. It is entirely a work of the mere reasoning faculty, though a special spirituality is curiously claimed for it. There is not a trace of an intuition in it. The intuitions are all against it. It outrages the moral sense; if I murdered a man to-morrow, would justice be satisfied if my brother came forward and offered to be put to death in my stead? It outrages the heart; it makes a Father who is perfect love pour His wrath upon a guiltless Son at the moment when the Son in perfect love chose to die for men. It outrages our idea of God; it makes Him satisfied with a fiction. It makes His notion of justice totally different from that which He has given us. It represents the All-Wise as in a painful dilemma out of which He can only escape by a subterfuge. It divides His nature, setting one part of it in opposition with another—mercy against justice—and so destroys all conception of His self-unity.

It is altogether so crowded with inconsistencies, though

so logical if the premisses are allowed, that I know no greater proof of the utter incapability of the mere intellect to deal with spiritual things, no greater proof of the truth of the text, 'The natural man understandeth not the things of the spirit, for they are spiritually discerned,' than the wide prevalence of this forensic view of the Atonement. For this theory is only the work of the understanding—only the work, not of the spiritual but of the natural man—in the minds of the many noble and Christian men who hold it.

Having rejected this theory we repeat our question, What does misfortune, suffering, coming to *the innocent*, mean? We have seen that it cannot mean, as in the former case, God's moral indignation. It means the exhibition to the world, when the suffering is voluntary, even when it is involuntary, of the central principle of God's life, the revelation to men that self-sacrifice is life eternal; and, inasmuch as this revelation redeems man, it means God's love to the race of man. This is the lesson of the Cross. For what is Christ crucified? It is the declaration in time of the eternal self-giving of God—of life for ever given away that all may live.

For the very being of God is in self-sacrifice, if I may be allowed to use the word *self* in order to express my meaning. And if we remove from the notion of sacrifice its earthly concomitant of pain, and replace it by perfect joy, by that ecstasy of pleasure which in rare moments a few in this world have felt when they have given *all* to bestow blessing and life upon another—that thrill of full and perfect being which made them feel 'This is life indeed!'—then we have some notion of that divine life which is God's at every instant of His being.

Man could not see this; he dimly felt it, but it needed to be made clear. So God sent His Son to reveal it in our nature.

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Christ came clothed in our mortal nature, and through it lived the sacrificing life of God. But, owing to the human nature, the self-giving was necessarily accomplished, not with perfect joy as God accomplishes it, but with a mixture of keen pain. It was then that we saw Love conquering pain; all the misery of rejected affection, the scorn and hatred of men heaped upon one sacred heart, and yet the sufferer loving those who hated Him, losing thought of all the ill done to Him in pity for those who did it, dying for the sake of His enemies. And seeing this, the world beheld the Divine Life, understood it, and recognised its beauty. It won the love of men: 'If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto Me.' It won the love of God: 'Therefore doth my Father love Me, because I lay down My life for the sheep.' This is the attractive power of the Cross. It first attracts Love to itself, and then, by deepening Love, changes the heart.

Many explanations have been given of the way in which the sacrifice of Christ acts on men as a redeeming power: mystical interpretations, logical schemes, things which require theologians to explain them. We will be content to find an explanation in that which lies around us, in the doings of our common life, falling back on the plain principle that the laws of Christ's life were the laws of human nature. If we look for it, we shall find the law of Redemption now and always at work. New in proclamation, it was not new in action. No man, no nation, has ever been rescued from degradation, except by the same kind of work as that by which God rescues the world.

Take one example out of common life. A widowed mother had an only son. All her love, all that regret for the dead which transmutes itself into love of the living, centred in him.

Her life had but one thought, and that made itself into service of him. Every day was a long self-devotion to win means for his education and enjoyment. But far away in the great city he wastes her substance in riotous living. Health makes him thoughtless, youth makes him cruel, and she is left alone. Only returning when his purse or his health is exhausted, she forgives him again and again, and again and again he abandons her. At last she dies and dies for him, still hoping still believing in him and leaving to him her blessing and her love. Her long self-sacrifice of life is over.

And he returns to the country village, and in the quiet evening stands beside her grave. All his neglect falls upon his heart; all her long patience and unbroken tenderness. A spring of love gushes in his soul, and with it hatred of his sin, self-loathing, temptation to despair. But he remembers that she forgave; he feels himself still loved, and in a softening rush of penitence he resolves that she shall be still alive to him. 'I will be worthy of her yet; with broken and contrite heart I will requite her love by being all she wished me once to be. We may meet again, and I will fall at her feet and tell her all my sorrow, and show her my repentance.' A mighty love takes him out of self and makes the past hateful. He thinks no more of his own pleasure but of what would have been her pleasure. That hour has redeemed him. He enters on a new life.

But observe, it is not primarily redemption from punishment. The punishment remains; the pain at his heart is keen, so keen that one might almost say the punishment has only now begun. But it is remedial suffering. It keeps her who sacrificed all for him constantly before his eyes: it stings him into new efforts to be worthy of her; it urges him to do for

others that which she did for him. In this way the punishment slowly alters itself into a means of ennoblement—a thing which works the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Thus, and thus only, is he redeemed from punishment. But he *is* redeemed from self, from hardness of heart, from baseness of character, from inability to feel punishment, from the sins of the past, from the tendency to yield at once to temptation.

Is that true or not? Are there not a million varied instances of the same kind occurring in the world around us?—friend who so saves friend; wife who so saves her husband; minister who so saves his people; men who so save a nation. Is not that simple, human, natural, easy to be believed in, appealing directly to our reason and our affections, worthy of our reverence, irresistibly attractive? Then, turn and believe in the redemptive power of Christ's Atonement, for that is its power. What the woman did for her son Christ did for all mankind. What influence in redeeming her son's life from self, and in recreating his life through a profound love for an invisible character, she had, though dead, upon him, when his soul was touched into seeing the divineness in her and into believing it as the divine life for him, is identical with the influence of the work of Christ's life and death upon us when we see them and acknowledge them divine.

Christ's death was the act in which the exhibition of this common law of redemption was concentrated, the central representation in history of the means whereby life is gained and life is given. And to believe on Christ is to look upon His life and death of sacrifice, and to say with a true heart, 'I know that this is true life; I accept it as mine. I will fulfil it in thought and action, God being my helper. I see the face of perfect love, and I cannot help adoring; and as I adore I

feel that love like this which gives all, is the only way of reaching the perfect joy of perfect being.

Then God is received consciously into the soul. Penitence breaks our heart, and we weep away our sin. Knowing that we are forgiven, we forgive ourselves. We feel in ourselves new possibilities of nobleness, for has not He loved us? Our life changes into likeness to His life, for in aspiration after it we imitate it, and in contemplating love of it we grow like to that we contemplate. We are regenerated, 'created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.' This is the subjective work of the Atonement.

And since that has been wrought in the world, what effect has it had with regard to our question as to whether the suffering of good men proves God's anger or, as we said, God's love to the race? Those who have so joined themselves to the spirit of Christ's life know that as long as humanity is humanity they can only do redemptive work through suffering; for he who opposes evil must bear evil. And knowing this, for the sake of the work they gladly accept the pain. Nay more; they know that the self-sacrifice, though it is linked to suffering, is in itself latent joy, for it is the very life of God, and when men object that it is dreadful that the innocent should suffer for the guilty, the innocent reply—'What is that to you, when we rejoice in it, when we accept it as life eternal, when we thank God that He has counted us worthy to do a portion on earth of His redeeming work, to be indeed a portion of His ceaseless sacrifice? We know now that to die for men is the noblest life; and if we are, as you say, good and true, we are only so in Him whose life we follow, and God is right to choose those most like His Son to carry on His Son's work

and to be crucified with Him. Our suffering does not prove that God is angry with us, but that He loves us so well that he has chosen us out of the world to manifest Him to the world. Our suffering proves that He loves the race, for through that which is of Christ in us He is declaring His character to men, and bringing them to follow the true life and to obtain the true joy.'

Again, to pass to another side of the question, it is plain that those who feel thus are reconciled to God. This reconciliation of man to God is another of the ideas of the Atonement. How does it take place; how is it we need reconciliation to God?

We need it, because our first idea of God is a false one. Our fear, united with our ignorance, make out of themselves a God in whom omnipotence is united to human passion—the God of superstition and fanaticism. We are angry with and fear this false idea. Creating our own God, it is no wonder that we hate him. For of what kind is he? One whose might makes his right, who doeth what he will, but whose will is unlimited by that which we recognise as goodness; one whose love is as arbitrary as his punishment is capricious, who saves this creature and slays another for his own glory and at his own fancy; one who asks for slavish worship; who, when he makes us what is called good, does it without demanding any effort from the soul; who requires to be propitiated by the sacrifice of reason and conscience, and does not tell us why; who annexes damnation to intellectual error, and in whose eyes a pure and noble life is nothing if he who lives it mistakes doctrine. I need not go through all that has been told us of God by idolatries and priesthoods and sects.

God's answer to them all is this—'Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself.'

How could we help rebelling against that Being, how be reconciled to Him? Man must rebel against a God who reproduces himself when he seeks for power. Bad as man is, he cannot bear, when he thinks truly, to accept as his ruler one who seems to be as capricious as a tyrant and more dreadful than any earthly tyrant, because His power is supreme.

We are told by some, when we refuse to love this God, that the explanation is that the natural man is enmity to God. There is a sense in which the natural man is enmity to God; but in rejecting a God of this character it is not the natural but the spiritual man which acts. It is in asserting this false God, a God created by the natural man, that the natural man is enmity to the true God. To create an immoral God, and to give him an immoral worship of fear and ignorance, is to be an enemy of God.

In all our best moments we are incapable of being reconciled to this Being. We can never be at one with God, atoned to Him, never be reconciled to Him, till we gain the knowledge of God as He truly is. It was part of the Atonement, that part which united us to God, that Christ revealed God in His life as He was and is for evermore. 'He who hath seen Me hath seen the Father.'

He revealed a Father, and therefore an Educator, who will bring His children to Himself. He revealed a God of compassion and love, whose life was in giving away Himself for all His creatures. He revealed One whose will was determined by right, and in whom justice, and love, and purity were the same in kind as they are in us, only perfect and infinite: One who asked to be loved, not feared; to be trusted in,

not propitiated by our unmeaning sacrifices. The sacrifices He asked for were such as He showed us in His Son: the sacrifice of our own pleasure and will when they were opposed to eternal right, when they did injury to our fellow-men; the sacrifice of life for the sake of truth and love; not the sacrifice to Him of His own gifts whereby He makes Himself known—the gifts of reason, and conscience, and human love. Nay, it is to these that He appeals. 'Why of your own selves judge ye not what is right?' said His Son. 'If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?' said His apostle. The God whom Christ revealed chose special men out of the world, not that they alone should be saved, but that they might be messengers to do His saving work on all; and he chose them not capriciously, but because they were more loving and true than the rest, and therefore better fitted for His work. The God whom Christ revealed was revealed as one who punished guilt, who would not spare retribution, but the punishment was to be remedial, and the retribution to be used as a means of salvation; as one who did not replace our effort by irresistible and imperial grace, but whose grace enabled us to work out, as under a free government, our own salvation, and demanded the effort of the soul, that we might become each a distinct person with a distinct character. And because allowing of this individuality and encouraging it, it follows that the obedience He asked was not a blind but a reasonable one, and that, if the life was like His Son's, intellectual error was not subject to damnation.

I need not dwell on all the points; but when this revelation was made, man was freed from fear and hatred of God, man could become at one with God, man was reconciled to God. And the gospel truth is this, that once a man really sees and

believes in God in Christ, he cannot rebel, he cannot hate, he cannot fear, he cannot be unreconciled to Him.

There is nothing left to hate or fear. Hate one whom we believe to be our Father in all the profound meaning of the word! Fear one who gives His very life for us! It is impossible. Once we believe it we are saved; saved, first, from our own ignorant and ghastly idea of God, which sets all our life wrong; saved, secondly, from our sin, because the true idea of God creates infallibly a life in accordance with it.

And now, in conclusion, and taking the principles we have just expounded as our key, has the idea which men have of God's anger no truth beneath its error?

Yes! this truth: that as long as a man does not know God in Christ, does not understand that God is love, and love Him as a father, he will think that punishment is anger, and this belief will make him angry with God. For love, exhibited in the process of his education, must often take the form of chastisement, and seem wrath to him because he does not comprehend its tenderness.

Suppose a man with a sore disease, and at the same time mad. The surgeon approaches with his knife to amputate the diseased limb and cuts deep and relentlessly. The sufferer sees no reason for the infliction of the pain, does not believe in the surgeon's kindness whose whole work seems to him mere capricious cruelty. It is so with the sinner who does not know God as a loving Father. His work to him is often anger.

But grant that he gains his reason, becomes conscious of his disease, desires to be free from it, and knows the surgeon's heart; his flesh quivers, his pain is bitter, but he understands the meaning of the suffering, and, though not one deep incision

is spared, he claims the surgeon as his friend, he recognises his work as the work of love, and, if some madman were to say, 'See how cruel; see how the man who said he wished your good is working you evil,' the sufferer would smile the smile of trust and pity. 'You mistake,' he would reply; 'I trust my friend's tenderness. I know his heart; it is I who pity you, if you cannot see his love.' It is so with the man who believes in the love of God his Father.

So it was with David! No help for me in God! God angry with me! God forsaking me! No! he breaks out. 'The Lord is my Shield, my Glory, and the Uplifter of my head.' I know I am being punished for my sin; I know I have done wrong to God and man; but I am not so lost as to imagine that punishment means that I have no help in God, and not that it means that He is with me, yes, more closely than in the days of my prosperity. Deserted by God. No! 'I cried unto God with my voice, and He heard from His holy hill.'

This is entirely splendid. This is faith overcoming the world. This is the trust which brings all the powers of the unseen to a man's side. This is the spirit which gives elasticity to life, and makes triumph out of misfortune. This is the spirit which transmutes punishment into strength, and sin into goodness. This is the spirit which, by believing in the eternal love of God and disbelieving in His anger, realises God as a Father and himself as a son, bound together by immortal bonds, which are knit closer by trial as well as by joy. This is the belief which makes a life and a character as noble as that of this old Hebrew king, who in these early times anticipated in experience the profoundest Christian feeling and knew by heart the God of the Christians before their Christ had come.

IV

ORIGINAL SIN.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

ORIGINAL SIN is another of the questions which is brought before us by the recent judgment, and on which it is fitting that one who professes to be a liberal clergyman should explain himself.

Let me read to you the ninth Article:

'*Of Original or Birth Sin.*

'Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk;) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in the Greek, *φρόνημα σαρκὸς*, which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.'

First, observe, it is called birth sin, that is, it is something which comes into the world with us, and is naturally inherited by all men. Plainly, then, it has nothing to do with that which we usually call sin, i. e. a wilful act against a known moral law. And that there is such a difference the Articles themselves allow, making a distinction between 'not only original guilt, but also the actual sins of men.' It does not therefore deserve 'God's wrath and damnation' in the same way as actual sin. It is well to keep that in mind, for within that idea the whole Article must be explained.

Again, the Article does not call it direct sin, but a *fault*, a *corruption*, an *infection* of our nature whereby we are of our own nature inclined to evil, and very far gone from original righteousness. Nor does the Article, on account of it, assert that our nature is wholly evil. The words used suppose another element in us which may be developed towards good, that which the Article calls the spirit. We are inclined to evil, 'so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit.' Hence the writers had the notion of two things in man unequally influenced by this infection of our nature; the flesh easily yielding to it, the spirit so far touched by it as to become powerless of itself to do good, but always in natural opposition to it, so that when enabled by God it takes up war against the flesh directly.

From this inequality of influence on the two parts of our being we see again that original sin does not imply a wholly evil nature in the child, but a fault *in* his nature of which sin is the result.

The tenth Article still further expands the meaning of original sin. It says that our condition is such that by our own natural strength we cannot turn to God, that we have no

power to do works acceptable to God without the grace of God by Christ preventing us. It is a kind of restatement of original sin. And, you see, it is not here either actual sin: it is a *powerlessness* in our nature to do good of itself. But it is nowhere said that that powerlessness makes our nature absolutely evil, nor that there is not in us a desire also to do right. On the contrary, the Article supposes that desire when it says that without God's grace we cannot produce fruits unto holiness.

Nothing of this, observe, binds us to believe the doctrine of 'imputed sin' in the Augustinian sense of the actual sin of Adam being accounted to his descendants. The Article, it is true, denies the Pelagian doctrine that original sin is not something inherited but sin having an origin in each man as it had in Adam; but in denying the Pelagian view it does not assert the Augustinian. It maintains that this fault is inherited, transferred naturally from man to man, but it says nowhere that it is an actual sin to which moral blame can be rightfully attached.

That there is a fault in our nature, however it arose, which is inherited from our progenitors, whoever they were, seems to me impossible to deny. It is a radical element in us, without which our nature would not be human nature, but something else. And when the Article asserts it, it asserts that which is not only true of the spirit, but also of all the powers of man, only the Article speaks of this fault in its relation to God, leaving aside its truth in relation to the senses and the intellect.

In its relation to God, the Article says it 'deserves God's wrath and damnation.' These are the strongest words, and it is important to consider the meaning which may be legally

assigned to them. They are repeated elsewhere in the Prayer Book. In the service for the private baptism of infants it is said of the child, 'who being born in original sin and in the wrath of God;' and in the Catechism, speaking of baptized persons, 'for being by nature born in sin and children of wrath;' and the judgment of the Judicial Committee calls us 'children of the wrath of God,' whatever that may mean.

If these terms mean and can only mean the extreme view that children are accounted guilty of the actual sin of Adam, and are therefore under the moral wrath of God for a sin which they have not committed, then we reject with dismay and horror the whole statement, though we allow that those who make it may honestly sign the Articles. It is a view which has been held by a large number of divines in the Church of England, and was probably held by many of the compilers of the Articles. Are we bound, as assenting to the doctrine of the Articles and Prayer Book, to hold it? Certainly not. The terms are capable of different meanings, and this meaning is nowhere defined, and purposely left undefined, in the Prayer Book. The English Church has always understood this. To take an extreme case. Some divines have maintained, and have been allowed to do so, that original sin is nothing but the inheritance of death and disease which followed on the sin of Adam, and the fear of which leads men into sin, and that our being condemned to death and the miseries of mortality may be called the wrath and damnation of God, for in these terms the Scriptures often express temporary judgments of God. It is a view which seems very difficult to reconcile with the Article, but that it has been held is a proof of the openness of the Article, with regard to the meaning of these terms and the nature of the 'fault.'

But that we are not bound to hold the doctrine of original sin in the sense of the imputation of the actual sin of Adam is plain from the Article itself. Its writers held on the whole that view, but they did not wish, apparently, to bind it on the Church. They actually use terms which do not bear out that view. After the description of original sin they might easily have fixed their view upon us by saying, 'and therefore every person born into this world deserveth God's wrath and damnation.' Instead of that, with a charitable wisdom they sacrificed their own special predilection, and said, 'and therefore in every person born into the world, it'—i.e. this original sin, this fault in our nature—'deserveth God's wrath and damnation.' By such a statement they expressly saved themselves from saying that man was born in a state of actual sin. They speak of an infection in our nature *whereby* we sin, but not of actual sin, and therefore though it deserved God's wrath and condemnation, it could not deserve it in the same sense as actual sin deserves it. They did not assert plainly the Calvinistic doctrine, and we hold ourselves free to deny that the words of the Judicial Committee, 'children of the wrath of God,' are binding upon us in that extreme sense of the terms.

We conclude, then, that the words wrath and damnation are modified by the subject to which they are attached. If the subject were actual and wilful sin, we should take them in their full meaning, only, of course, explaining the word wrath so as to take away from it its human sense of passionate anger which is impossible to God; God's wrath being the expression in punishment of calm spiritual laws which annex spiritual loss to sin.

But the subject here is not actual sin; it is an infection,

a fault, in our nature. And with regard to this defect, the wrath and condemnation of God are simply the result of the law of His nature which inevitably demands perfection, and therefore cannot help punishing defect. It must punish in order to produce knowledge of defect and effort against it. Wrath, in the sense of the judicial vindication of absolute law, does its work on this fault in us; but there can be nothing, in such wrath, of anger, of want of love, of denial that we are children of the Love of God, though we are out of harmony with His law. On the contrary, such wrath as this has its root, and the root of its action, in desire to bring us to perfection. It is the revelation of God's Will for our salvation; it is the expression, the inevitable expression of His Eternal Love, manifested through law in contact with our defectiveness.

There is no more of moral wrath or of personal anger in it than there is in the action of physical law annexing pain to our unconscious violation of such law. The violation is condemned; punishment, the wrath of law, comes upon us. But no moral blame comes with it. Its object is to tell us that we must get on the side of law, and that we can do this; and its root may be said to be held in Love.

No moral wrath rests on the infant, no moral blame is imputed to him on account of a fault in his nature. Moral blame does not come till actual sin has resulted from the fault. But though no moral blame is attached to us, yet there is distinct division between us and God, so far forth as this defectiveness extends. The chords of our nature are not in tune with those of God. They ring false in His ear. The phrase then that this infection in our nature deserves God's wrath and damnation is simply the statement of the spiritual

fact that the nature of man and the nature of God are not in harmony, that God cannot be in perfect union with a being whose nature has in it an infection which inclines it to evil, that to this thing in us God is opposed, that He condemns it, that He works upon it by punishment, but always with the loving object of uniting us through remedial punishment to His own Perfection.

This is very different from the extreme statement made by some on the strength of this Article that God, on account of this infection in our nature, is absent from us altogether, counts us as children of the devil, as wholly under His moral wrath, and without any further hesitation condemns us on account of a sin which we have never committed. These statements we directly deny. We assert that God cannot be perfectly at one with us, or with the whole race, not even when we are regenerated, as long as this fault in our nature remains, and that this defect in us deserves condemnation in this sense. But we assert also that we have a tendency to good which God enables to resist the tendency to evil, and that God sympathises with that tendency; that this fault in our nature does not prevent Him from loving us, from being always with us, from acting towards us as a Father to His own children, from educating us in resistance to evil towards the final eradication of this inclination to evil—in one word, towards perfect union with Himself.

If we have children unlike us in character, supposing our character to be a noble one—children whom some defect of nature is leading continually into selfishness, or violence, or untruthfulness—we do not cease to hold them as our children: we love them all the more because they need us more. We have no *perfect* sympathy with them; we condemn this

defect in their nature; we make them feel by punishment that it must be got rid of before we can be wholly at union with them; but we do not cast them away from us, nor leave them unassisted to develop their defect unchecked into all its evil results. Our one effort, on the contrary, is to educate them into likeness with ourselves, to enable them by free effort to work out the wrong in them, and in working out the wrong to establish the right.

And this is precisely what God does for us individually, and has done for us in Revelation. He saw this defectiveness in our nature—saw that, let alone, we should run headlong into sin, that we were powerless of ourselves to help ourselves, and He came to our side at once and began our education.

But we were separated from Him, owing to this fault in us, and did not see Him clearly. It was necessary then as a first step in this education that He should reveal Himself to us. That was the origin of an outward revelation. As men could take it in, by His voice in our own hearts, through nature, through good and noble men, He disclosed to us what He was, at sundry times and in various manners, and at last He revealed Himself in Christ Jesus as the all-loving Father whose one object was to make men like Himself. In this truth He asked our belief. For, once recognised and felt as true, a mighty aspiration kindles in the heart of man, a power not his own comes upon him, he knows by faith that he is destined to perfection, and the idea regenerates his life. It kindles in him the victorious war of the Spirit which lusteth to good against the other desire in him which makes him lust to evil. The struggle has then begun which is our destiny here, and makes our life, and is inseparable from our humanity.

But there was one more difficulty which men felt, and

which, unsolved, left them, not hopeless of this conquest, but in mournful doubt of it. Even the noblest among all nations, while hoping that this freedom from the infection of their nature was possible, even while believing it, had no reason to know it. They knew—and indeed no religion, heathen or otherwise, has ever denied it—that there was an original fault in man, a twist in his nature which needed to be untwisted, and the question arose again and again, was it possible for Humanity ever to get right; could there be such a thing as a perfect man?

That question was answered by the coming of Christ. God sent Him to show us that what He asked of man, and what man dimly aspired to, was possible—nay, that in the original conception of man in God's mind he had nothing to do with this original sin, but was an indefective Thought of God. It is historically true, according to our faith, that there has been a perfect Man in whom God saw humanity in entire harmony with Himself. And if that be true, no truth can be so exalting and consoling. It tells us that our actual nature is divine and uncorrupt, and that this infection in it is not essential to it. It tells us that the ideal humanity has been realised, and that everyone who now labours in the earthly humanity shall also in turn attain to the ideal.

To believe that, is at once to have hope in failure, perseverance in difficulty, joy as a fiery heart in the midst of suffering, and confidence in the final issue for ourselves and for our beloved humanity. We are content to bear the results of our defectiveness when we know that, through struggle with it, by God's help and in His love, we shall reach indefectiveness at last.

This is the doctrine of original sin, and so I accept it. But

now a new question arises, to which no complete answer can perhaps be given. Why should there be this fault in our nature? why should God have made us with this wrong twist; or rather, to put it better, why were we not made at once indefective?

I answer, because God wanted humanity. He did not desire a new angelic nature in the universe in which there should be no effort, no contest, no dramatic possibilities. When men ask that they should have been made perfect, they are asking that no such thing as this human nature of ours should ever have existed, and, for my part, steadily looking at all its baseness and all its pain, at all its awful tragedy and folly, I cannot conceive a more miserable void than that which would be left in the universe had man never been, but only angels. But man would never have been had there not been this struggle, and the struggle would never have been had there not been the fault in the nature. The very definition of humanity is imperfection labouring to become perfection.

And what has come out of this fault in us? What should we have lost had it not been? Not only a new being in the spiritual universe, but all the long history of spiritual effort against sin and the glorious results of the war of the spirit against inward evil; and more, all that the passionate eagerness of man against the defects in his nature has produced—the long march of accumulating knowledge, and its delight—the victories won over the reluctant forces of nature, and our triumph in them—the noble expression in art and poetry of the varied play of the passions and the intellect of man in the battle—the wider interests involved in the growth of political, religious, and philosophical ideas as the contest deepens towards its close—the infinite, varied, and million-coloured scenery of human life.

And because we are indignant at the trouble of the long campaign, and whine over the suffering we are called upon to bear, we want to do away with all this wild and glorious drama, and claim that God should have made us sharers for ever in the monotony of innocence. I, at least, choose otherwise. If God were to offer me in the one hand perfection, and in the other the endless struggle to perfection, I should answer, Keep, my Father, perfection to Thyself, Thou alone canst bear its fulness and not stagnate; give me imperfection with the passion for perfection and the power of progress.*

No! To deny original sin is ridiculous: it is a radical fact in humanity. To ask that we should have been without it is to blot humanity out of the universe, and the pity of that would be greater than all the congregated sorrows of the race.

And now, granting this whole theory as true, what is human life under its aspects, and what its end? It is the aspiration of the imperfect to the perfect, fulfilled in work and not in dreams; the slow growth through failures which stimulate aspiration and through small successes which accumulate into conquest, of the individual and the race. And the glory is great, for the strife is hard.

But the special dignity of human life, that which makes man in himself neither God nor angel nor brute, that which makes him a vital individuality in the universe, his distinctive mark alone, is a result of this very imperfection which supplies him with ceaseless fuel for feeling, ceaseless aims for work, and room for indefinite advance. Man alone is capable of progress.

This conception speaks then of a perfection to come within which we shall grow; this defectiveness in our nature of an

* One remembers Lessing's phrase.

indefectiveness to come. We look forward to this, but we do not want perfect perfection, but a perfection, if I may express my meaning by a paradox, capable of becoming more perfect. Enough for us, at first, if the tendency to evil be wrought out of us, and we tend with all our harmonised powers to good. But to have all good at once; as some have pictured; to have the intellect entirely satisfied because all facts are known; the spirit without aspiration because all truth is clear; all the power of loving drawn forth because all beautiful things in soul and sense are realised; the imagination contented to repose because it has received, reflected, and composed all possible images into all possible forms—God forbid! neither here nor hereafter be that our lot! Whatever be the fate of other spirits, let it be ours never to attain. May we always find the infinite before us, always have the pleasure of tempting unknown seas, always be creatures capable of noble curiosity. No thought of the other world haunts us with so much dismay as the thought that we might know all, or imagine that we did know all. To us men that would be indeed the very pain of hell. To have tasted on earth of the delight of effort and of conquest; to have been trained in the school of aspiration; to have had the pleasure of progress woven in with our existence, and then to have nothing to work against, nothing to idealise, nothing to conquer, and no daily consciousness of advance—against all other ills human nature might bear up, but not against that. For if the time should ever come when no impassioned desire made this heart within us beat, when no height remained for the spirit or the intellect to gain, and we were left in desolate pre-eminence upon the topmost peak of attainment, then it would be time indeed for this humanity of ours to die, and breaking into tears, in nobler

fashion than the young Greek conqueror, perish in its deep regret.

No one can help recognising that this passion which I have described is inherent in our nature, and none can deny its nobleness. It is that in us by which we most truly exist and out of which the most victorious deeds and thoughts of men have grown. And whence does it come, this inspiration—this ecstasy in conquest? It has one of its roots in God, but the other is fixed in our defectiveness: it is cradled in our original sin. The wrongness in us, coexistent with divine desire to get rid of it, gives the sting to aspiration and effort and bids them be for ever sleepless. Our imperfection almost makes mad at times our desire for perfection. Original sin is the source of our pain, and our pain is one source of our progress. Man cannot have a fault in his nature without desire and effort to be faultless, and God is ever at hand to deepen the desire and to assist the effort.

But it is a long business, and it goes through many stages, and it is of infinite variety in many men. What it is in the spiritual life, how we, by God's grace, arrive at goodness through our error and our sin, has been the subject of a thousand sermons. But that this original fault runs through our whole nature, and how it influences all lives—life of the artist, the philosopher, the politician—is not sufficiently considered. When we find the same defectiveness in our intellect—a powerlessness to get beyond a certain point; in our imagination—a powerlessness to shape our dreams; in our execution—a powerlessness to put into form all the images we can shape in thought, we find that the fault in our nature works in its own way in other realms than that of religion. In these other realms it is also one source of aspiration and of effort.

Feeling our defectiveness we desire to be indefective and that with passion.

In youth we do not feel this as pain, or at least it is pain made by tension of desire into keen pleasure. Health, the morning freshness of life, the wild hopes of inexperience send us forth with the certainty of attainment in our heart. God, we think, would not give these Divine desires unless He meant to fulfil them, and fulfil them here. They are His voice, we whisper, which we hear. We go forth resolved to win the whole of knowledge, or to realise all the infinite of love, or to attain to perfect spiritual purity.

A few years pass and we are rudely undeceived. We find that the means of life are limited, that we have no power answering to our conceptions. The innate fault in our nature makes itself felt. Aspiring to grasp the whole of truth, we find ourselves baffled by some petty problem which, slight as it is, has yet one grain in it which no thought of ours can solve. Aspiring to grasp and reveal in form to man the whole of beauty, we are perplexed with the multitudinous shapes of beauty which wander through our soul and forbid us seizing even one. For when we desired to embody one, the others seemed then too beautiful to reject. We could not be faithless to them for the sake of one, and at last, sick of the infinite desire to do more than man can do, we accept our inability and resolve, if we cannot embody all, to embody none, and life is failure because it dared to ignore the original fault of nature. So we learn at last, with a bitterness proportioned to our youthful excitement, that if we aim at realising the whole of anything we miserably fail; that complete attainment is forbidden by the limitations of existence; that we are kept imperfect, and that if we wish to do any practical work we must know our limits and work within them.

And so we begin afresh. But now, scorning our old hopes, disgusted with aspiration towards a vague unknown, we choose to find all we want in this world. We put aside desires for perfection hereafter. 'This life is all,' we say; 'we choose nature or pleasure or art or knowledge, and no more of them than is possible on earth. We will be content with our limitations.'

But just at this point the problem deepens. For this limited effort also fails. We are greater than our limitations and are always rushing beyond them. In the midst of any possible attainment, the haunting ideal enters in. There are spiritual influences from without which keep up aspiration.

This, then, is the weary weight of life. There is no practical success unless we submit to work within our limits, but if we are content with our limits we have more miserably failed than before. If while working within our barriers we should ever be satisfied with our work, if the soul ever says, 'now I want no more,' then that is indeed utter ruin. We must submit and we must not submit, must be contented and must be uncontented. In this baffling storm of life we are indignant, passionate, weary, energetic, despondent, aspiring, all by turns. We are not allowed to sleep, till at last there dawns upon us the truth that we are here to grow enough to be able to take part in another life, where the imperfections of earth will pass into perfections.

For, should we lay by aspiration and choose to realise our ideal here, what have we got? One branch of knowledge inadequately known, one form of pleasure which grows dull, one ideal statue, one ideal painting, one ideal of emotion in music, and having found it, and being content with it, there we stay. Life stagnates round us; progress is over. We

have chosen the world, God gives us the world. 'Take what you wish,' He says, 'fill yourself with the love and knowledge and pleasure of the earth, but know to your misery'—unless you cannot know it, and that is the last and most dreadful doom which can befall a man, the doom of the serpent's life, the eating of dust when one might have fed on God—'know to your misery that all the beauty and knowledge of earth are but as one flower culled from the million flowers of plain and hill, to the infinite beauty and knowledge which, laid up for you in Me, might have been yours had you not rejected them. You were on the way to an indefective life, you choose to remain in a life which the fault in your nature must make defective. Take your choice as your punishment.

That is the doom of the soul which ceases to aspire. It is a doom in which I do not believe that God will finally leave any son of man. He will afflict the dead soul by sore suffering till it desire again, and teaching it that it is the child of a higher life, fulfil at last the desire within Himself.

But, brethren, we will not, by God's grace, necessitate for ourselves this long and dreadful work which God does on stagnant souls. We will refuse to find all we want on earth, we will not be content with defectiveness. But by trust in a Father, by love of Him supported; accepting our original fault and making it the starting-point of effort and aspiration; by bringing the love of Christ into the work of life, let it be ours to do devoted work for man within our limits, and yet remain uncontented with them to the close; live patiently a manly life by love, and yet live by faith in a higher life to come. And if God gives us His love and we feel ourselves His children, we can endure all things though we may not do all things. Nor shall other blessings be unknown to us in the

midst of the whirling storm of life. His love in us will make us love man, and that larger love sweetens all effort however small its sphere and blesses even failure. The secret of God's joy will be made known to us though we cannot reach it yet; we shall know that He rejoices in living in the life of all, and feel that this will be our joy hereafter. Our imperfection will tell us of perfection, our fault of faultlessness. We shall trace beneath all evil promises of good, and die in peace, secure of attainment, though life has seemed defeat. For though life may not be made victory, it may be made the threshold of victory, and then the close shall come. Original sin which set awry all things here shall be finally replaced, through the effort of the soul which it produces and through the preventing grace of God, by the original righteousness which belonged to humanity in God's idea of it and which was realised in humanity in Christ Jesus.

V

THE LIBERTY OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.—1 Thess. v. 21.

I am going to-day to speak of the third point in the late Privy Council judgment which affects, or seems to affect, the position of a liberal clergyman in the Church of England.

Some years ago, in the judgment pronounced in the case of the Essays and Reviews, a large freedom of interpretation and of criticism of the Bible was granted, or appeared to be granted, to the Church. That freedom was gratefully accepted, and freely used. The results have been remarkable. The Bible, approached in the same manner as we approach any other book, has gained in reality, in interest, and in power. Its human and its spiritual sides have both been brought into greater prominence. Its literary and intellectual interest has been more widely recognised. It has become not less the book of religious circles, but more the book of Humanity. And these gains have been in proportion to the loss of those mystical and infallible qualities which have been imputed to it in the past, and which had relegated it to a region in which all exercise of the reason upon it was pronounced either impious or dangerous. No true book suffers from being removed out of the misty valley of superstition and placed in the mountain air of honest enquiry, and the Bible is not less reverenced or loved by us, but more, now that we have

subjected it for some years to the ordinary critical tests. The pure gold of the book shines brighter, and is recognised more quickly, now that we try to separate it from the alloy; and the alloy itself has become interesting for its historical and human value. Formerly, when both were considered equally divine, both suffered from the confusion. It is easy to see what follows when alloy is maintained to be gold, and gold to be alloy.

Well, it has seemed to many, both within and without the liberal ranks, that the late judgment takes away from us this freedom. It appears to them to say, first, that no passage in the Scriptures may be subject to free criticism which relates to faith or morals; secondly, that no passage may be so interpreted as to contradict another; and thirdly, that no individual criticism is allowable at all, and that this last restriction is in fact a death-blow to criticism altogether.

I cannot think that the judgment means this, for it is openly and professedly based upon the judgment in the case of Essays and Reviews, which, as I have said, gave us a certain liberty of criticism. And again, some of its strongest statements seem to be deliberately modified. For example, it says that it is not consistent with the Sixth Article for any private clergyman of his own taste and judgment to assert that whole passages of the canonical books are without authority or spurious, and this seems to forbid any exercise of individual criticism. But the judgment adds these words, 'not founding himself on any critical enquiry,' which seems, on the other hand, to encourage criticism.

But whatever we may think of the intention of the judges, this at least is plain from the fact of the active discussion on the meaning of the judgment, that it is not clear. Men do not debate on the meaning of that which is not ambiguous.

I do not sympathise with those who take refuge in this ambiguity, and say, 'We will pass by the judgment in silence, and go on as before.' That is a position which must before long become untenable. We ought to know where we are. The whole question is too vital to be shuffled out of sight. It involves the whole future of Liberal Theology; it is bound up with the interests of all the truths for which we have specially been contending. Nor is it fitting that men who hold to the freedom of criticism, and who have used that freedom as scholars, in or out of the Church, should not be able to decide whether they can enter into or remain in the Church or not. There are numbers, of whom I have met some already, who, reading this judgment, are in distressing doubt as to the course of action it imposes on them. I do not think they should be left in doubt. One does not complain of an ambiguity which leaves us a fair amount of liberty in interpreting a judicial document, but it is not only ambiguity which is here, it is ambiguous ambiguity. We ask for no hard and fast definition of the limits of Biblical criticism, but we should like to be sure that the liberty we thought was ours was still in our possession—whether this judgment leaves it as it was or narrows it—whether it accords with or contradicts the genius of the Church of England. We wish to obey the law; but we should like to know what the law means.

We suspend our action till we know whether freedom is narrowed or not; we take advantage of the ambiguity, but we do not wish to do so in silence. If, owing to the wording of a marriage law, a man did not know whether he were truly married or not, everyone would recognise that the position in which he was placed was unfair. He would himself do all he could to obtain a clear statement from the law, but he would

not separate from his wife and declare his position illegitimate. He would hold on till some clear decision settled the point of dispute. But he would not hold on in silence. Too much would be involved for that. He would state his position with clearness as his best protest against the ambiguity of the law.

I wish to state to-day my own position with regard to the criticism of the Bible, and what, I conceive, I may legally say within the limits of the Sixth Article.

The first statement of the Article is, 'that the Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation.' Now, great stress was laid in a previous trial on the word 'containeth.' All things necessary to salvation were contained in the Scriptures, but everything contained in the Scriptures was not necessary to salvation, to be believed. All things necessary for life are contained on the earth and in the air, but everything on earth and in the air is not to be considered as necessary to life. It became then a principle of interpretation, legal to use, as it seemed within the terms of the Article, to distinguish a human and a Divine element in the sacred Scriptures; an element subject to human error, and an element of Divine truth, revealed by God through inspired men.

On this principle of interpretation, then, we considered ourselves permitted—I use the word 'we' speaking solely of my own opinion—first, to freely criticise all passages relating to subjects which belong to the sphere of physics, such as the history of the creation of the world and man, the universality of the flood, the movement of the earth and the like. They were to be subjected to precisely the same strict enquiry as any physical hypothesis is subjected to by a natural philosopher, and as they answered the enquiry they were to be accepted as true or rejected as erroneous.

Many of the Biblical statements have not stood that test, and at once we came to the conclusion that, whatever inspiration might mean, it did not include infallibility on these points. We deny that the writers knew more on these subjects than any other men of the time at which they wrote. The discovery of Galileo, in fact, settled this point.

Unfortunately, the idea of a Biblical infallibility still lingers among men, and the spiritual power of the Bible is still involved with its accuracy on physical questions. Whether the question be one of geology, or a new theory of species, or the descent and age of man, there is still a battle to save this book from being pronounced in error; a series of reconciliations are still proposed.

These attempted reconciliations only serve to bring the Bible into discredit, partly because, as science goes on, they are one by one proved inadequate, partly because they contradict and disprove one another, and wholly because they all try to make the words of Scripture mean something else than a common-sense interpretation, such as we would give to the same statements in any other book, would lead us to adopt. They seem to me waste of time and labour in support of a wrong notion. I do not say that it is a matter of indifference to me whether the Bible be proved in accordance with modern science or not, for I should feel, if it were in accordance with modern science, that the wisdom of Inspiration might be fairly challenged. To link modern knowledge to a spiritual revelation given to men who had no modern knowledge would have injured their reception of that revelation. If Moses had told the people of Israel that the earth went round the sun in the same breath as he told them that the Lord their God was one Lord, the total

incredibility with which they would receive the first would lead them to be as incredulous of the second. A revelation must be given in accordance with the knowledge of the time, or it will be rejected. On distinct grounds, its truth and its use are outside of the sphere of physical truth.

Under this head comes, however, a very important question, the question of miracles. These seem to directly contradict the root theories of science. For myself, I do not, as you know, deny the miraculous; though I do deny that a miracle is any violation of law. But as it plainly is something out of the ordinary sequence of things, any alleged miracle ought to be most severely investigated; and if the text fairly allows of any other explanation than a miraculous one, that explanation ought to be received. I claim, therefore, as a right, the liberty of submitting every statement of the miraculous to the freest possible criticism, only not forgetting that the previous question, as to the possibility of miracles at all, has to be much more widely debated than it has been at present, before we can come fairly to the discussion of the miraculous element in the Scriptures. The invariability of natural sequences is the very thing called in question. Our opponents have no right as yet to assume it as proved. And there are other factors in the question, which have also to be discussed; whether matter really exists, or is essentially nothing but force; and then whether force is anything but will or thought; and then whether the whole universe is not actually the will or thought of God. And should the latter ever admit of proof, then the miracle would certainly seem to be thinkable, and therefore less improbable than the existence of matter, which most people accept, but which is philosophically unthinkable.

I claim the freedom of criticism on the miraculous element

in the Bible, not with the intention of discrediting the miraculous, but with the conviction that, unless the question be discussed with liberty, we shall never arrive at any intellectual certainty on the possibility, for instance, of a miracle like the Resurrection, to which, on other grounds, we give the assent of faith.

2. Passing to another point, we claim the liberty to submit to free criticism the historical portions of the Sacred Scriptures. Things necessary to salvation we believe, but it can hardly be said that a belief in the infallible accuracy of the whole history is necessary to salvation. Moreover, if such a belief is demanded of us, one proved inaccuracy is fatal to the whole; and it is almost ridiculous to bind up the historical reality of the account of the Passion of Christ with the historical reality of the story of the dispersion at Babel.

Criticism has proved that there are discrepancies in the historical books; it has rendered it more than probable that the more archaic narratives in Genesis and elsewhere are of little historical value; it has shown that the authors of many of the books were not contemporaries of the events narrated, and that the details are necessarily traditional, and share in the uncertainty of traditions.

Whatever inspiration means, it does not guarantee historical infallibility, and the history of the Bible is open to the same sort of criticism as that which we bestow on any other history.

Such criticism—once we have laid aside the theory of infallible inspiration—has not in its results done any wrong to the Bible, but the contrary. The book is not less, but more, reverenced by us, now that it makes no longer impossible claims on our belief. The critical and careful laying aside of that which we found mistaken, temporary and local in it has

brought out more clearly than before that which is divine, spiritual, and permanent in it. And the historical record, freed from the superstitious claims made for it, has given up that which is true in it, and become of the greatest possible interest and value.

Now, it is at this point especially that we seem to come into collision with the judgment. First, in that all individual criticism not founded on any critical enquiry appears to be condemned; and secondly, in that the appellant is condemned because he asserted that there were manifest, palpable, and irreconcilable contradictions in the Scriptures, and many places which could not be explained but as repugnant to others.

With regard to the first, as all criticism was at first individual, it seems absurd to forbid it; and the judges probably put in that passage about founding oneself on critical enquiry in order to save the liberty of individual criticism while forbidding a licentious use of it. The introduction of the Twentieth Article as an authority on the question is a strange proceeding. The phrase in it, that the 'Church may not expound one passage of Sacred Scripture in a manner repugnant to another,' is used as an argument in this way: 'It is incompetent,' says the judgment, 'for any private clergyman to do that which the Church is incompetent to do.' But the Twentieth Article has nothing to do with the subject. It is 'On Rites and Ceremonies,' and the application of all its phrases is limited to the subject of which it treats; i.e. the Church may not expound one passage of Sacred Scripture—with regard to rites and ceremonies—in a manner repugnant to another. This is the ordinary, common-sense interpretation of the phrase, and it may be doubted whether it can be legally applied as against

a clergyman in the manner stated above. It is a portion of the judgment which manifestly requires revision. It appears to create a limit to criticism where no limit exists in the Article in question.

Moreover, it is open to this blame, that it seems to say that no individual clergyman can speak except as the Church speaks. This may be hyper-criticism, but, if such an inference were possible, it would take away not only our critical freedom of interpretation, but bind again upon our shoulders the yoke of the Roman Church, by which the interpretation of the Church is the only one allowed to be received.

With regard to the second point—the condemnation of the appellant for the assertion that contradictions and discrepancies exist in the Sacred Scriptures, and that no passage may be interpreted as to be at variance with another—the condemnation is modified, or seems afterwards to be modified, and, if it be not modified, I do not know who in the whole Church could stay in the Church. But suppose for a moment that the Liberal clergy could not tell from the judgment whether the above statement were modified or not, suppose the judgment were not clear, then I submit that this would not be a fair position in which to place the Liberal clergy. Look at its results in one point alone. He who should believe that this part of the judgment was modified would remain in the Church; he who should believe it was not modified would either leave or would not accept preferment. Both would continue to hold the same opinions, and yet two distinct and opposite modes of action would follow the same cause. The result would be that the world would consider Liberal opinions as vague and undefined, whereas it would be the indefiniteness of the judgment which would have forced conscience in two different characters into

opposite actions. Again, he who should stay would be called dishonest by some; he who should leave abruptly, scrupulous by others; and both would be called honest by their friends. I cannot imagine anything likely to work so much practical harm to the Church itself, and to the moral position of the Liberal clergy, as such a want of distinctness in the judgment.

The best thing to do is to re-state our position distinctly in the face of this possible indistinctness. We hold, founding ourselves on critical enquiry, that there are contradictions, discrepancies, and those manifest and palpable, in the historical portions of the Scriptures; we hold that there are passages in them which must be interpreted in a manner at variance with other passages; and to forbid us to say this is not only to forbid us to say the truth about things, but to bring the Scriptures themselves into manifest discredit, by opposing them to the truth.

If this part of the judgment be really unmodified; if it is no longer lawful, for example, to say that S. Paul changed his opinion on some points as he grew older, so that passages in his later epistles appear to be at variance with passages in his earlier epistles; if we can no longer point out the differences which exist between the first three and the fourth gospels, differences which I myself think can be embraced into a unity, but which apparently exist; if criticism be not allowed to play freely round these and similar points, then we are simply put back to the time when men forgot the spirit and life of the Sacred Scriptures in a theory of their infallibility, when reason was sacrificed to a superstitious idea of an inspiration which was independent of the writer's character and growth, when interpreters, instead of asking what the writer really meant when he wrote, set themselves to force the expressions of the writer into what they wished him to say.

And, as to discrepancies and contradictions, if it is incumbent on us to say, in the face of the Scriptures themselves, that there is no discrepancy between, for instance, the two accounts of the flood in Genesis, or no inconsistencies in the narrative of the gospels, or nothing irreconcilable in the genealogies of Christ; or that there are no contradictions between the books of Kings and Chronicles; if we are forced to begin again the old miserable useless labour of harmonising and reconciling accounts, with the clear knowledge now, not only that they cannot be perfectly harmonised, but also that, if they could, it would be fruitless work, then we are indeed depraving our teaching of the Bible by uniting it to falsehood in ourselves, and depraving the Bible itself.

We are doing more. By claiming infallibility for its history we are depriving it of all historical value at the very time when a free criticism was making its historical value clear.

A good deal has been said about the evils of destructive criticism. I do not like criticism the aim of which is destruction, not truth. But its evils are those which time most surely cures—and truth is not destroyed. Destructive criticism, when it becomes licentious, cuts its own throat, and it is better to let it arrive at this conclusion. If you wish to keep its evils alive, the best way to do that is to persecute it. If you wish it to produce good results by a kind of reflex action, let it have its course—watch it, seize the hints it gives you, let it tell you what is really dead in the things it criticises, and build up for yourselves a firm edifice of true things by constructive criticism.

Destructive criticism has its evils, but none so great as the evils which follow on forbidding criticism altogether. To put the clergy back into a position where they will have to continually twist their intellect awry and to violate the morality

of common sense and to suppress the truth, in order to appear to get over Biblical difficulties, is to encourage a sort of criticism which, far more rapidly than any infidel criticism, will destroy with the laity not only any respect for the clergy—and that is not unimportant—but any reverence for the book which the clergy are asked to maltreat in the name of Truth.

If the judgment is so unmodified as to mean us to do these things, then it is better to close the Bible altogether. To study it under these restrictions is inconsistent with the truth which makes free, with self-reverence and with the faith and morals we profess, for 'false words are not only evil in themselves, but infect the soul with evil.'

Lastly—for it is impossible to finish the subject to-day—we ought to remember that the time has come when silence on the known results of criticism or on unfinished critical enquiries is no longer right or prudent. I think it impossible that this judgment should really mean to enforce this silence upon the clergy. I think its modifications must be intentional. Otherwise it would argue in those who pronounced it either incredible ignorance of the universal stir around them or equally incredible imprudence.

For, even if we would, we cannot now leave to men or women their early heaven, their happy views. The matter is taken out of our hands. The questions which criticism debates are debated in every workshop, in every drawing-room. And are the clergy the only persons on whom silence is to be imposed—we, who ought to be beforehand and not behindhand in such discussion on things dear to us? When all the world is enquiring, is the pulpit to be the only place where enquiry is forbidden? Are we, part of whose business is Biblical interpretation, to ignore all the efforts of the laity to understand

the Bible? When a Christian ministry lags behind the knowledge of the time, it must soon come to an end; and its end will be swifter, hastened by a just contempt, if it is believed to know truth and to suppress it, if it is open to the charge of loving truth less than its opinions. It would be indeed a deadly blow to the Church of England if this judgment meant, as some think it means, that all searchers for truth have no business within its pale. We are trying to free the pure spirit of Christianity and the spirit and life in the Bible from their connection with things which contradict the reason and are in opposition to knowledge; and it would be not only to place the Christian ministry, but Christianity itself, in a false position, the evil of which we cannot calculate, if this judgment should mean that we must retrace our steps and again place faith in antagonism to reason and conscience at war with intellect.

Such a return on our path would only keep as Christians those who would be Christians without our help, and it would exclude, and rightly so, from our congregations all those who are in a state of scepticism, all who are asking what truth is—the very class whom we should wish especially to help if we could, with whose enquiry we are bound most heartily to sympathise.

For these reasons it is well to assume that this judgment does not restrict the liberty we have had; but for these reasons also I have thought it my duty not to pass it over in silence.

Meanwhile, we call upon all—ministers and people—to enquire after truth, and to hold it as the first of virtues without which all other virtues become corrupt. We have no sympathy with its intemperate pursuit, nor with the notion that overthrowing everything is the way to find it. It ought to be

pursued by a slow, sober, just, patient effort, based upon the principle that in all error there is a grain of truth hidden by which the error lives; the loss of which grain, by our heady violence, will vitiate our conclusion. We should not be afraid of facing criticism on the Scriptures, but we should subject criticism itself to critical tests, and weigh its conclusions well. Nothing is easier than destructive criticism, and nothing is more intellectually contemptible than the hasty acceptance of its inferences by persons whose delight is to contradict received opinions. The sudden determination of questions which have employed the intellect of centuries by men who have a constitutional infirmity of seeing only one side of a thing is an insolence done to the love of truth. A slow sobriety in balancing the results of criticism, and in judgment is one of our greatest wants. There is no need of hurry. We have an eternity before us in which to arrive at truth; but because we have eternity before us, we must not neglect the endeavour to discover truth: for such neglect will have its results in the enfeebling of the organs by which truth is found; and neither in this world nor in the next is knowledge given to feebleness. The Bible will not lose but gain from the process devoutly but sternly performed. Its truths, as they appear, freed from the mist of human error, will be all the more dear to us because they have been told to us by men who shared in our common humanity. It will no longer be set up as the opponent of reason, but as in harmony with it; and, the intellect satisfied, will leave free room to the spirit to receive its wise and tender lessons. It will speak to the heart in the heart's own language. Its human lives, and the history of their guidance by God, will tell us that we are also guided and cared for by Him. The principles of its profound

national morality, as declared by the Prophets, will pass into our national life. Its psalms and prayers will express for us the wants, and sorrow, and joy of our souls; and deepen, by expression, our religious life. Its history of the continuity of religious life will unite us to the whole past of humanity; and, while it makes us at one with Abraham, and David, and Isaiah, teach us to be at one with Socrates, and Aurelius, and Confucius. And its central figure Christ, where all these things meet and mingle into sinless unity—where the Fatherhood of God and the Sonhood of Humanity reveal themselves—where all that is divine is made human, and all that is truly human is exalted to the divine—where the past Revelation fulfilled its imperfections, and in whom the future Revelation is contained in germ—in whom Love, and Truth, and Purity met together to give us a personal revelation of the character of God, will have His redeeming, consoling, and exalting power on our souls.

This might be—this is the work on us of the Revelation of God in the Bible—were the book freed from the burden of those opinions about its inspiration which needlessly force many of its statements into opposition to our conscience, and into variance with our intellect. To free it from these things is the work, not of a rude and wanton, but of a temperate, just, and conscientious criticism; and the liberty of such criticism we claim for the Clergy of the English Church.

VI

THE LIBERTY OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

1 Thess. v. 21.

It has been said that those who sign the Articles bind themselves down to a rigid set of opinions, and this being the case, that it is incomprehensible how the clergy of the Church of England, holding the wide variety of opinions that they do, can all hold office under the same Articles without some of them being dishonest.

This is so common an accusation and founded on so common an ignorance, that it is worth while to give it a brief reply.

First. It has been said that the Church of England was a compromise. That is true and not true. It is not true that the Church compromised any vital point of doctrine. The great doctrines we are required to believe are laid down with determined clearness. But there is a difference between doctrines and our opinions about them. Ten men may confess the truth of the Atonement and repose the peace of their hearts upon it. But each of those ten men may formulate the doctrine differently with regard to the mode in which the Atonement is effectual, and though it is important for life how men conceive that mode, it is of minor importance. It is in this sphere of opinions about doctrines that the Church of England made a compromise. I believe

that the writers of the Articles wished to include in the Church men who agreed on large outlines of doctrine, but who differed widely as to the intellectual form in which they cast those doctrines. We are bound, for example, to believe the doctrine of Original Sin, of a fault and corruption in our nature, but what that infection of our nature is—whether physical or moral, whether an actual sin imputed to us or a tendency towards sin, or the general defectiveness of our humanity—is left undetermined, and from the time when the Article was written to the present day four or five opinions as to the nature of Original Sin have been held by divines of the Church and considered to be legally and honestly held within the terms of the ninth Article. It is the same with many others of the Articles. The doctrine is required, but the intellectual form of the doctrine is left open for the play of the conscience and the intellect.

Secondly. They were to be subscribed according to their 'literal and grammatical meaning,' and that meaning is determined by law. One would say that that settled the question as to their rigidity of meaning. On the contrary, in many cases, it throws the Articles open. For when terms are chosen which have several meanings, the sentence in which these terms are used is literally and grammatically true in different senses. Take, for example, a well-known instance in the Third Article: 'As Christ died and was buried, so also it is to be believed that He went down into Hell.' Now the writers of the Articles knew very well that to this word Hell three distinct meanings were given by divines: the Grave, the Hades, and the actual Hell of lost spirits, and that two at least of these meanings were connected with two opposed theological schools. We believe it was their intention to include all those

who held these meanings, and, in order to enable them to sign the Article, they did not define what they meant by Hell. Therefore, when the terms used are not defined in themselves or by the context, and different meanings have been given to them within the Church, we are left free by the Articles to allot to them our own meaning, provided that meaning does not implicitly or explicitly contradict any clearly-defined doctrine.

Whether all this was very wise, whether the freedom it gives us has not evils which spoil it, whether the position in which it places us now before the laity is becoming untenable, whether it would not be better to do away with the test of the Articles altogether, or whether if we did we should glide from a bad position into one much worse, is not now the question.

This is at present our position, and I have stated it that I may introduce to you what I believe to be an intentional ambiguity in the Sixth Article, which bears upon the subject on which I spoke to you last Sunday, and which I discuss to the end to-day. That subject is the free criticism of the Scriptures in relation to the judgment of the Privy Council.

The first question is, Does the Sixth Article prevent us from discussing the Apostolical authority of all or any of the books of the New Testament? I reply, that it does not do so, in the case of some at least. A strange ambiguity in it—too strange, I think, not to be intentional—permits those who subscribe to the Articles to express doubts as to the authority of such canonical books as have been doubted in the Church. 'In the name of Holy Scripture,' so runs the Article, 'we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority there was never any doubt in the

Church.' We have then a list of the names and number of these canonical books in the Old Testament. A list is then given of the Apocrypha, and its books are not applied to establish any doctrine. But no list is given of the books of the New Testament; only these words are written—'all the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account them as canonical.' Now the omission of the catalogue in this case leaves a difference between canonical books of the New Testament and such canonical books as have never been doubted in the Church.

This is a remarkable ambiguity. Was it intended? Did the compilers of the Articles leave us intentionally a certain freedom of opinion on the authority of certain books? I think it was an intentional ambiguity for these reasons. The compilers knew well that the Apostolic authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, of that of 2 Peter, of the Epistles of S. James, of S. Jude, of the 2 and 3 of S. John, and of the Apocalypse, had been continually disputed in the Church, and apparently they did not wish of their own judgment to determine the question. They knew that the continental reformers had also doubted the Apostolic authority of several of these books. Calvin did not believe that the Epistle to the Hebrews was by S. Paul, and he doubted that the 2 Epistle of Peter was the work of that Apostle, but he did not deny, as we do not, the canonicity of these books. Luther, on internal grounds, spoke against the canonicity of Hebrews, Jude, James, and the Apocalypse, and the Lutheran Church admits the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments, without making any distinct declaration of the books which are to be admitted. A freedom of opinion has thus been left to the Lutheran theologians and

they have freely used that freedom. Œcolampadius declared that the seven disputed books were not to be placed in the same rank as the others. Now as long as the authenticity is doubted, the Apostolic authority remains in abeyance, even though the canonicity is allowed.*

The authors of the Article were not unaware of these doubts, and it seems that they left the question undecided by giving no list, choosing rather to be ambiguous than to restrict freedom.

We have made use of this liberty. We have held ourselves permitted to deny, if we see fit, the Apostolic authority of these books and to doubt their authenticity, though not their canonicity.

But one might almost think that this freedom granted to us by the Articles was unknown to the judges, and the words of the judgment seem to take it away. We are told, in a strange inversion of the sentence of the Article, that 'the sixth Article lays down that there was never any doubt in the Church of the authority of the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments.'

What might we infer from that sentence, literally interpreted? We might infer that all the books of which there *was doubt* have no authority and are excluded from the canon. So that legally and on the curious authority of two archbishops we might be bound to deny the authority of the seven disputed books, a question which the sixth Article has only left in doubt; and to deny their canonicity which the Article accepts. This

* My authority for this statement of the ambiguity of the sixth Article, and the difference it leaves between canonical books of the New Testament and such canonical books as have never been doubted in the Church, is the Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge, our highest authority on the Canon. I have used here and there his very words. See Westcott's 'Canon of the New Testament,' pp. 534, 535.

is a curious result, and as I believe that the court has only made a mistake, I not only still adhere to the canonical character of these books, but consider myself as before, at perfect freedom to discuss as freely as possible their Apostolic authority, though not their canonicity.

But in later years in England the same kind of criticism which led the early Fathers and the Reformers, and indeed some in the Roman Catholic Church, to dispute these seven books has been applied to other books of the New Testament of whose authority in the past there seems to have been no doubt in the Church. The Gospel of S. John has been disputed as a work of that Apostle's, and so have many of the later Epistles of S. Paul. The discussion of such questions does not seem to be forbidden by the judgment. But it certainly condemns the appellant for denying as spurious large portions of the Gospel of S. John because they conflict with his private view of the character and doctrine of Christ as contained in the three first gospels. But it adds that he has done this 'not founding himself on any critical enquiry,' as if, if he had founded himself on such enquiry, it would have been lawful for him to criticise such passages. If so, the judgment would seem to do no more than condemn rash conclusions and ignorant criticism. But some have thought that it intends more than this, that it seems to limit the freedom of the clergy, even after critical enquiry, if that critical enquiry leads them to state that one passage is repugnant to another, or to deny on their own responsibility the authority of any passage, or to question the accredited authorship of any book.

I cannot think that this is the intention of the judgment, for it is plain, nowadays, that these restrictions will not do.

The whole question of the authorship of the books both of the Old and New Testaments must be left open. It cannot be suppressed by any pretence that it does not exist. In the case of the Old Testament it has been already far and wide assumed that the authorship of the books is an open question. No one denies that the books are canonical, but we have felt quite free to discuss the date of composition of the several books of the Pentateuch and the various ages of their fragments; to divide Isaiah as we have it between the prophet of that name and another writer of the Captivity; to trace insertions from earlier times in Isaiah and the various prophets; to relegate Ecclesiastes to a much later date than Solomon; to freely treat the authorship of all the books as a question to be determined by historical criticism. The judgment has not pronounced against this liberty of ours with regard to the Old Testament, and we now claim the same liberty with regard to the authorship of the books of the New Testament.

The notion that their authority as a rule of faith depends entirely on their authenticity arises out of the theory of a special inspiration differing in kind from that given to other good and holy men, a notion wholly, I think, unsupported by the Scriptures themselves. That the writers were inspired by God I believe to be true, that holy men of old wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit I believe to be true; but were only those inspired whose names are handed down to us, does God inspire no one now, do no men speak now moved by the Holy Ghost? Many do so, for God has not ceased to act on men.

Our Prayer Book does not deny this; on the contrary, it implies it in its use of the word Inspiration. The word occurs but three times, twice in the Prayer Book, once in the Articles,

and in every passage it speaks of an inspiration coming to us now and abiding in us now. 'Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of the Spirit' (Art. xiii.). 'Grant to us Thy humble servants that by Thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good and by Thy merciful guiding may perform the same' (Collect for fifth Sunday after Easter). 'Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit' (Collect for the Holy Communion). These passages support my view. They speak of a present Inspiration. And though I think that for the purposes of revealing spiritual truth and universal principles for the guidance of national and individual life, the inspiration which fell on Prophet and Apostle was greater in degree than that which God has given and gives still to other men, yet I hold that it was the same in kind. Criticism has done much to destroy this view of a distinct inspiration, especially supernatural because different in kind from that which God has given to all the teachers of the race. It has expanded our view of the extent of inspiration. It has been pretty clearly proved that many of the books of the Old Testament contain extracts from various authors whose names are wholly unknown to us. The Psalms, to take a well-known instance, are the work of many obscure men as well as of David, Asaph and the rest. They do not lose their authority on this account.

And the view of the inspiration of the New Testament may have to submit to the same extension. Books, of whose Apostolic authority there was never any doubt in the Church, may be proved not to be the authentic work of those to whom they are attributed, but that proof will be no bar to the authority which the Church gives them as a rule of faith. What,

you say, when they are proved to be forgeries? Yes, if such proof is given; but I do not see that it follows that they were forgeries because this or that name is attached to their introduction. Whether they were so or not depends on the author. Did he issue them as an authentic composition of the writer whose name stands at their beginning? If so they were forgeries. Did he issue them as his own composition in the name and manner of the writer whose name stands at their beginning? If so they were not forgeries. And this latter kind of composition seems not to have been uncommon among the Jews. One does not reject the authority of the Proverbs of Solomon or of Deuteronomy because we think that Solomon did not write the one nor Moses the other, nor do we call them forgeries. And supposing it were proved that the Epistle to the Colossians, for example, was not written by S. Paul, a thing to the last degree improbable as I think, it would not follow that the Epistle should lose its authority or be pronounced a forgery unless we could also prove that the writer pretended that it was written by S. Paul, and that the public to whom it was given did not know that it was not written by S. Paul.

The fact is, the authority of the books of the Old and New Testaments is derived from the deliberate choice of the Church, before and after Christ, of the books we possess as those which contained the clearest and noblest revelation through inspired men, of God's will, and of the education which He had been giving to the world. The history of the growth of the Canon of Scripture is the history of a slow and wise judgment exercised on many books (excluding some, retaining others), supported by the voice of all the Church, and I believe directed by the Divine Spirit which labours in the Church. It

is this long historical effort, the unanimous suffrage of the whole Church, laity and clergy, formed only after centuries had passed by, formed as it were unconsciously, and after the books had been before the criticism of the Church for generations, which causes us to allot to them a superior value, as inspired books, to any other books to which we do not also deny inspiration.

We claim, then, full liberty to criticise the authorship of all the books while accepting them as canonical, just as the Articles have retained the seven disputed books as canonical but have left their Apostolic authority still in doubt.

So far for this part of the subject.

The next and last thing I shall discuss is the inference which some have drawn from the judgment that we are not permitted to explain any passage *having reference to faith or morals* in a sense at variance with any other. But we need not trouble ourselves about inferences. A judgment such as this speaks only, of course, of that which lies before it. Nor, indeed, could the judgment intend that such an inference should be drawn by anyone. If it meant its words to have full value on this point, they would directly take away the power of stating views about the Scriptures which the Scriptures themselves encourage us to state.

Take, first, questions of faith. The doctrine of Immortality is a question of faith. We hear nothing of immortality in the earlier books of the Old Testament. There are even passages which apparently deny it along with others which apparently assert it. It would be difficult, for example, to say that this passage in Hezekiah's prayer, 'The grave cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee, they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth,' is not somewhat at variance with—

'I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better.'

The doctrine of a Sacrifice for Sins is a matter of faith, but the mode in which the Old Testament conceived it during the Mosaic dispensation is expressly said in the Epistle to the Hebrews to be replaced by another—'He taketh away the first that he may establish the second.' And when a covenant is expressly declared to be made old—as it is in this Epistle—to be decayed and ready to vanish away before a new one, it can scarcely be denied that there are some things in the old with which the new may be at variance.

The doctrine declared in the second commandment that the sins of the fathers shall be visited on the children was a matter of faith to those to whom it was given. But the prophet Ezekiel, having reached a higher spiritual level, directly contradicts it, and it is said that the whole chapter (the eighteenth) was so startling to the Masters of the Synagogue, as seeming to contradict the Pentateuch, that they hesitated to include Ezekiel in the canon. 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' 'As I live, saith the Lord God, there shall be no more this proverb in the house of Israel.' 'The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.' In fact, the chapter itself, as a whole, and the history of the dismay of the Rabbis at its repugnancy to another part of sacred Scripture is a deathblow to such a statement as some suppose they ought to infer from the judgment.

We claim then, on the ground of the sacred Scriptures themselves, liberty to contrast passages in them which pertain to

matters of faith with other passages, and to say that they may be at variance with one another, and that this is—on the supposition of a progressive revelation—necessarily so.

Again, with regard to matters of morals. The relations of wife to husband are a matter of morality. Christ Himself reverses the Mosaic conception and replaces it by the ideal one. 'And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement and to put her away. And Jesus answered, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.' And then he reverses the precept in 'a counsel of perfection' ending with this phrase: 'What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.'

It was lawful under the Mosaic law to claim an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, and orders are said to be given by God to the Israelites 'not to seek the peace or the good of their enemies the Moabites for ever.' Christ reverses both these when He says, 'Love your enemies, bless them which curse you, do good to them that hate you,' in another counsel of perfection.

The keeping of the Sabbath is considered part of the moral law. The mode of keeping it enjoined in the Pentateuch is put aside even in the Prophets, is decidedly put aside in the Gospels, is still more decidedly put aside in the Epistles. 'Ye observe days and months and times and years,' said S. Paul; 'I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed on you labour in vain.' That is a passage which can hardly be said not to be at variance with a hundred passages in the Old Testament.

We claim, then, the right which the Scriptures themselves give us to interpret passages which relate to moral action in a manner repugnant to others, when those others are plainly at variance with the highest morality taught us in the Bible.

We say that we must expect this variance, for Christ has taught us, and the Epistles in various passages carry out this teaching, that the revelation given in the Bible is a progressive revelation.

Now, a progressive revelation assumes that the revelation given is proportioned to the moral sense of those who receive it. As much and no more than they *can aspire to* is given. To give the morality of the gospels to the savage and ignorant Jews of the desert would have been absurd. It would have been like giving to a boy who has just mastered the first book of Euclid the Principia of Newton as his next study. To ask of Joshua's army that it should do good to its enemies would have been as much out of the question.

The morality taught in the Pentateuch is the morality of a primer, the morality of the earlier Psalms is higher, the morality of the Prophets is higher still. As the nation advanced through the revelation given—the revelation being always somewhat in advance of the natural morality—new revelations, higher and higher still, each containing the germs of that which was to follow it, grew up in the minds of the best men, under the work of God's Spirit, and were given through them to the people, and the conclusion is that we must not demand more from the nation or the writings than the time allows us, we must not ask the morality of Isaiah from Samuel, nor the morality of S. John from Isaiah. We must expect to find many things in the earlier books of the Old Testament at variance with the morality of the Prophets, still more at variance with the morality of the Gospels. We have an actual right, then, from our Christian point of view to say that many things attributed to God in the Old Testament, such as the commands to utterly annihilate the Canaanites,

are wrongly attributed to God, and that many things called good, as when Jael is blessed for the slaughter of Sisera, and others, are the product of the imperfect morality of the time—though we must also remember, first, how Divine the morality is which is mixed up with these things—how far beyond anything we possess in books of contemporary or even of later age, are the leading truths of Revelation in the several Old Testament books; and, secondly, that these things in which we see a morality at variance with that of the Gospels were not unnatural nor horrible at the time, and that if we had lived ourselves at the time our conscience would not have been violated by them at all. Nay, it would be quite possible for some of us in a moment of passionate patriotism to sing as Deborah did, and to break into praise of one who should assassinate a tyrant as doing the work of God, as some did here when Orsini made his attempt. Nor have we quite forgotten how not very long ago we claimed our merciless slaughter of the Hindoos, in which whole villages of innocent persons suffered, as the vengeance of God Himself.

On the ground, then, that the revelation given in the Bible is a progressive one with regard to faith and morals, passing from less perfect to more perfect, and on the authority of the Bible itself we claim the right to a free criticism of passages relating to faith and morals, taking in this case as our standard the ideal of faith and morality given in the accepted teaching of Christ. We claim the right to say that it is, in itself, a depraving of Scripture and a denial of its whole idea of the progressive disclosure of more and more perfect things to take without any modification many of the statements of the Old Testament as binding now on faith and morals, or to understand many passages as not at variance with the faith and morals revealed to us in the received teaching of Christ.

It may be thought that the whole of this statement contradicts the seventh Article, in which it is said that the Old Testament is not contrary to the New. It is not so; the whole argument is based on that continuity of a progressive revelation which asserts that the revelation in the Old Testament contained the germs out of which developed century after century the revelation in the New. The New Testament fulfils, explains, and completes the Old. One spirit, one set of truths, runs through both. But that by no means implies that everything in the one is in strict accordance, on subjects of faith and morals, with everything in the other, or that everything in the books of each, on such subjects, is in accordance. On the contrary, it implies that such accordance cannot be. The tree, at each stage of its growth, differs from the sapling, though the same life and the same idea runs through all its stages, though every stage of its growth supposes the next.

You may say, how am I in this difficulty to judge as to what is permanent or not, Divine or not, necessary to salvation or not in the Bible. All authority is taken away from me. Not quite; there is the moral consensus of the time in which you live, a consensus which has been developed by the slow action of Christianity upon the world, and which is, in itself, I believe, the work of the Divine Spirit of God on humanity. Any plain contradiction of that consensus, whether in faith or morals, in the Bible, cannot be in it of divine or permanent value. We are bound to reject it as part of the rule of faith, unless we deny that our present standard of morality is the work of God, a denial which would be practical atheism.

Ultimately, in our personal life, the appeal for authority is made to the Spirit of God in us, who verifies for us His own work in His own book, and in other books. But He verifies

it in no preternatural manner, but through the means of spiritual organs, which He assists in their work. What are these 'verifying faculties,' to adopt a term from a well-known writer? Here are some of them. 'He that loveth knoweth God'; 'If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine'; 'Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein'; 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God'; 'He that is of the truth, heareth my voice.'

These are the faculties whereby we discern the things of the Spirit of God in the Bible—a loving and a pure heart: obedience to the known will of God; the childlike spirit; the being of the truth—to these the Bible is an open book, and he who possesses them, and in whom God's Spirit is developing them day by day, needs no outward authority. Of his own self he determines what is necessary or not necessary to believe in the Scriptures.

This is an individual criticism which all earnest men carry on in their own hearts, and when others—specially set apart as interpreters of the Bible—and in desire of the truth, apply the same criticism to the sacred Scriptures in public, not in the spirit of mockery but of sincere and loyal reverence, are they to be silenced? It is said that this is the meaning of this judgment. I cannot believe it. No set of men could wilfully impose on more than half the clergy—for in this matter far more than the liberal party are involved—a legal obligation which would sever the whole of their public exegesis of the Scriptures from their private exegesis of the same.

It is possible that all fear of this portion of the judgment is chimerical. But when freedom such as we have enjoyed is in danger, or even seems to be in danger, fear becomes a

virtue. To let a prisoner loose to enjoy the freedom of earth and sky and his native land, and then to reimprison him for making use of his freedom, would be a cruel and tyrannical act. To give us the liberty of prophesying and when we make use of it to restrict us within narrower limits would not be wise for the Church or charitable to the clergy. I can understand when liberty has been made into license, that the existing limits of liberty should be re-defined, and to that one has no objection; but that having been defined they should be drawn back, that cannot be borne with patience. The stream of freed Biblical criticism once let loose cannot now be dammed up without danger. Its waters will collect behind the dam, and the feeble barrier will give way. But in the rush of the conglomerated waters, not only the barrier but the very foundations of the present constitution of the Church may be swept away.

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